Pottermore Stories

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- *Written by J.K. Rowling*
- *Thank you, for compilation, /u/dangerouslycheesey94*

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Number Four, Privet Drive

The name of the street where the Dursleys live is a reference to that most suburban plant, the privet bush, which makes neat hedges around many English gardens. I liked the associations with both suburbia and enclosure, the Dursleys being so smugly middle class, and so determinedly separate from the wizarding World. The name of their area is 'Little Whinging', which again sounds appropriately parochial and sniffy, 'whinging' being a colloquial term for 'complaining or whining' in British English.

Although I describe the Dursleys' house as big and square, as befitted Uncle Vernon's status as a company director, whenever I wrote about it I was unconsciously visualizing the second house I lived in as a child, which on the contrary was a rather small three-bedroomed house in the suburb of Winterbourne, near Bristol. I first became conscious of this when I entered the number four Privet Drive that had been built at Leavesden Studios, and found myself in an exact replica of my old house, down to the position of the cupboard under the stairs and the precise location of each room. As I had never described my old home to the set designer, director or producer, this was yet another of the unsettling experiences that filming the Potter books has brought me.

For no very good reason, I have never been fond of the number four, which has always struck me as a rather hard and unforgiving number, which is why I slapped it on the Dursleys' front door.

Ghost plots

This is a personal expression, which has nothing to do with tales of the dead.

Over the seventeen years that I planned and wrote the seven Harry Potter books (not to mention Quidditch Through the Ages, Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them and The Tales of Beedle the Bard), I generated a mass of information about the magical world that never appeared in the books. I liked knowing these things (which was fortunate, given that I couldn't stop my imagination spewing it all out) and often, when I needed a throwaway detail, I had it ready because of the background I had developed.

I also found myself developing storylines for secondary (or even tertiary) characters that were superfluous to requirements. More of a

wrench were the plots I worked out for some much more important characters that had to be sacrificed for the bigger story. All of these I inwardly termed 'ghost plots', my private expression for all the untold stories that sometimes seemed quite as real to me as the 'final cut'. I have occasionally been in conversation with a reader and made mention of part of a ghost plot; looks of consternation cross their faces as, for a split second, they ask themselves whether they have accidentally skipped twenty pages somewhere. I apologize to anyone I might have accidentally wrong-footed in this way; the problem is, literally, all in my head.

Vernon and Petunia Dursley

Harry's aunt and uncle met at work. Petunia Evans, forever embittered by the fact that her parents seemed to value her witch sister more than they valued her, left Cokeworth forever to pursue a typing course in London. This led to an office job, where she met the extremely unmagical, opinionated and materialistic Vernon Dursley. Large and neckless, this junior executive seemed a model of manliness to young Petunia. He not only returned her romantic interest, but was deliciously normal. He had a perfectly correct car, and wanted to do completely ordinary things, and by the time he had taken her on a series of dull dates, during which he talked mainly about himself and his predictable ideas on the world, Petunia was dreaming of the moment when he would place a ring on her finger.

When, in due course, Vernon Dursley proposed marriage, very correctly, on one knee in his mother's sitting room, Petunia accepted at once. The one fly in her delicious ointment was the fear of what her new fiancé would make of her sister, who was now in her final year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Vernon was apt to despise even people who wore brown shoes with black suits; what he would make of a young woman who spent most of her time wearing long robes and casting spells, Petunia could hardly bear to think.

She confessed the truth during a tear-stained date, in Vernon's dark car as they sat overlooking the chip shop where Vernon had just bought them a post-cinema snack. Vernon, as Petunia had expected, was deeply shocked; however, he told Petunia solemnly that he would never hold it against her that she had a freak for a sister, and Petunia threw herself upon him in such violent gratitude that he dropped his battered sausage.

The first meeting between Lily, her boyfriend James Potter, and the engaged couple, went badly, and the relationship nose-dived from

there. James was amused by Vernon, and made the mistake of showing it. Vernon tried to patronise James, asking what car he drove. James described his racing broom. Vernon supposed out loud that wizards had to live on unemployment benefit. James explained about Gringotts, and the fortune his parents had saved there, in solid gold. Vernon could not tell whether he was being made fun of or not, and grew angry. The evening ended with Vernon and Petunia storming out of the restaurant, while Lily burst into tears and James (a little ashamed of himself) promised to make things up with Vernon at the earliest opportunity.

This never happened. Petunia did not want Lily as a bridesmaid, because she was tired of being overshadowed; Lily was hurt. Vernon refused to speak to James at the reception, but described him, within James' earshot, as 'some kind of amateur magician'. Once married, Petunia grew ever more like Vernon. She loved their neat square house at number four, Privet Drive. She was secure, now, from objects that behaved strangely, from teapots that suddenly piped tunes as she passed, or long conversations about things she did not understand, with names like 'Quidditch' and 'Transfiguration'. She and Vernon chose not to attend Lily and James' wedding. The very last piece of correspondence she received from Lily and James was the announcement of Harry's birth, and after one contemptuous look, Petunia threw it in the bin.

The shock of finding their orphaned nephew on the doorstep a little over a year later was, therefore, extreme. The letter that accompanied him related how his parents had been murdered, and asked the Dursleys to take him in. It explained that, due to the sacrifice Lily had made in laying down her life for her son, Harry would be safe from the vengeance of Lord Voldemort as long as he could call the place where her blood still existed home. This meant that number 4, Privet Drive, was his only sanctuary.

Prior to Harry's arrival, Petunia had become, if anything, the more determined of the Dursleys in suppressing all talk about her sister. Petunia had some latent feelings of guilt about the way she had cut Lily (whom she knew, in her secret heart, had always loved her) out of her life, but these were buried under considerable jealousy and bitterness. Petunia had also buried deep inside her (and never confessed to Vernon) her long ago hope that she, too, would show signs of magic, and be spirited off to Hogwarts.

Reading the shocking contents of Dumbledore's letter, however, which told her how bravely Lily had died, she felt she had no choice but to take Harry in, and raise him alongside her own cherished son, Dudley. She did it grudgingly, and spent the rest of Harry's childhood punishing him for her own choice. Uncle Vernon's dislike of Harry

stems in part, like Severus Snape's, from Harry's close resemblance to the father they both so disliked.

Their lies to Harry on the subject of how his parents had died were based largely on their own fears. A Dark wizard as powerful as Lord Voldemort frightened them too much to contemplate, and like every subject they found disturbing or distasteful, they pushed it to the back of their minds and maintained the 'died-in-a-car-crash' story so consistently that they almost managed to persuade themselves it was true.

Even though Petunia was raised alongside a witch, she is remarkably ignorant about magic. She and Vernon share a confused idea that they will somehow be able to squash the magic out of Harry, and in an attempt to throw off the letters that arrive from Hogwarts on Harry's eleventh birthday, she and Vernon fall back on the old superstition that witches cannot cross water. As she had frequently seen Lily jump streams and run across stepping stones in their childhood, she ought not to have been surprised when Hagrid had no difficulty making his way over the stormy sea to the hut on the rock."

Vernon and Petunia were so-called from their creation, and never went through a number of trial names, as so many other characters did. 'Vernon' is simply a name I never much cared for. 'Petunia' is the name that I always gave unpleasant female characters in games of make believe I played with my sister, Di, when we were very young. Where I got it, I was never sure, until recently a friend of mine played me a series of public information films that were shown on television when we were young (he collects such things and puts them on his laptop to enjoy at leisure). One of them was an animation in which a married couple sat on a cliff enjoying a picnic and watching a man drowning in the sea below (the thrust of the film was, don't wave back - call the lifeguard). The husband called his wife Petunia, and I suddenly wondered whether that wasn't where I had got this most unlikely name, because I have never met anybody called Petunia, or, to my knowledge, read about them. The subconscious is a very odd thing. The cartoon Petunia was a fat, cheery character, so all I seem to have taken is her name.

The surname 'Dursley' was taken from the eponymous town in Gloucestershire, which is not very far from where I was born. I have never visited Dursley, and I expect that it is full of charming people. It was the sound of the word that appealed, rather than any association with the place.

The Dursleys are reactionary, prejudiced, narrow-minded, ignorant and bigoted; most of my least favourite things. I wanted to suggest, in the final book, that something decent (a long-forgotten but dimly burning love of her sister; the realisation that she might never see

Lily's eyes again) almost struggled out of Aunt Petunia when she said goodbye to Harry for the last time, but that she is not able to admit to it, or show those long-buried feelings. Although some readers wanted more from Aunt Petunia during this farewell, I still think that I have her behave in a way that is most consistent with her thoughts and feelings throughout the previous seven books.

Nobody ever seemed to expect any better from Uncle Vernon, so they were not disappointed.

Clothing

Wizards at large in the Muggle community may reveal themselves to each other by wearing the colours of purple and green, often in combination. However, this is no more than an unwritten code, and there is no obligation to conform to it. Plenty of members of the magical community prefer to wear their favourite colours when out and about in the Muggle world, or adopt black as a practical colour, especially when travelling by night.

The International Statute of Secrecy laid down clear guidelines on dress for witches and wizards when they are 'out in public.

When mingling with Muggles, wizards and witches will adopt an entirely Muggle standard of dress, which will conform as closely as possible to the fashion of the day. Clothing must be appropriate to the climate, the geographical region and the occasion. Nothing self-altering or adjusting is to be worn in front of Muggles.

In spite of these clear instructions, clothing misdemeanours have been one of the most common infractions of the International Statute of Secrecy since its inception. Younger generations have always tended to be better informed about Muggle culture in general; as children, they mingle freely with their Muggle counterparts; later, when they enter magical careers, it becomes more difficult to keep in touch with normal Muggle dress. Older witches and wizards are often hopelessly out of touch with how quickly fashions in the Muggle world change; having purchased a pair of psychedelic loon pants in their youth, they are indignant to be hauled up in front of the Wizengamot fifty years later for arousing widespread offence at a Muggle funeral.

The Ministry of Magic is not always so strict. A one-day amnesty was announced on the day that news broke of Lord Voldemort's disappearance following Harry Potter's survival of the Killing Curse. Such was the excitement that witches and wizards took to the streets in their traditional clothes, which they had either forgotten or adopted

as a mark of celebration.

Some members of the magical community go out of their way to break the clothing clause in the Statute of Secrecy. A fringe movement calling itself Fresh Air Refreshes Totally (F.A.R.T.)[1] insists that Muggle trousers 'stem the magical flow at source' and insist on wearing robes in public, in spite of repeated warnings and fines.[2] More unusually, wizards deliberately adopt laughable Muggle confections, such as a crinoline worn with a sombrero and football boots.[3]

By and large, wizard clothing has remained outside of fashion, although small alterations have been made to such garments as dress robes. Standard wizard clothing comprises plain robes, worn with or without the traditional pointed hat, and will always be worn on such formal occasions as christenings, weddings and funerals. Women's dresses tend to be long. Wizard clothing might be said to be frozen in time, harking back to the seventeenth century, when they went into hiding. Their nostalgic adherence to this old-fashioned form of dress may be seen as a clinging to old ways and old times; a matter of cultural pride.

Day to day, however, even those who detest Muggles wear a version of Muggle clothing, which is undeniably practical compared with robes. Anti-Muggles will often attempt to demonstrate their superiority by adopting a deliberately flamboyant, out-of-date or dandyish style in public.

1, President Archie Aymslowe

2, To date, they appear to have been taken as cult members by Muggles.

3, These are generally taken by Muggles to be students on a dare

Measurements

Just as British witches and wizards do not use electricity or computers, they have never turned metric. They are not governed by the decisions of the Muggle government, so when the process of metrication (switching to metric measurements) began in 1965, witches and wizards simply ignored the change.

Witches and wizards are not averse to laborious calculations, which they can, after all, do magically, so they do not find it inconvenient to weigh in ounces, pounds and stones; measure in inches, feet and miles; or pay for goods in Knuts, Sickles and Galleons.

When the manuscript of Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone was first accepted for publication in Britain, the copy editor advised me that all weights and measures would be changed to metric, which

was the publisher's standard practise. I refused to allow the change because, for the reasons stated above, there was no logic to the thing. However, this ought not to be taken as any kind of political statement on the part of the author. I am not anti-European; on the contrary, I am all for Britain being part of Europe, and I am part French myself. Nor do I have anything against the metric system, which is much more logical than the imperial, and which certainly makes baking much easier. However, I do find the old system much more picturesque, much quirkier, and therefore more appropriate to the kind of society I was describing.

The decision to keep the imperial system in the book had an unexpected sequel, which was an invitation to join the British Weights and Measures Association. As I do not agree that Britain ought to refuse to use the metric system (as many of this society's members do), I was about to throw this invitation in the bin when I was struck by a sudden thought, and changed my mind. I know that what I am about to say does not reveal very good things about my character, but I had realised in a flash how much it would enrage my sister, Di, if I signed up. Di is never funnier than when infuriated, and among her many pet hates is the old-bufferish adherence to the old ways just for the sake of them, or because-by-God-it's-British-and-no-Johnny-Foreigner-is-Going-To-Tell-Me-How-To-Measure-Suet-ness that such an organisation represents.

When my membership came out in the press, she exploded in a really satisfying outpouring of rage. I could hardly stop laughing long enough to tell her that I'd only joined to annoy her. This rendered her almost incoherent with indignation, which was possibly even funnier. Frankly, I doubt whether anyone has ever had as much fun for the price of a postage stamp

Mr. Ollivander

Born 25th September
Wand Caribbean and Dragon heartstring, twelve and three-quarter inches, slightly bendy.
Home Ollivanders
Special Abilities Unparalleled understanding of wandcraft
Friends and Family Mother, Muggle-born mother
Hobbies His profession is his obsession

The family of Ollivander has long been associated with the mysterious profession of wandcraft. It is said that the name means 'he

who owns the olive wand', which suggests that the original Ollivander arrived in Britain from a Mediterranean country (olive trees not being native to the UK). Mr Ollivander himself believes that his earliest forebears in this country arrived with the Romans, and set up stall (subsequently shop) to sell to ancient British wizards whose wands were crude of construction and unreliable in performance.

Mr Ollivander is arguably the finest maker of wands in the world, and many foreigners travel to London to purchase one of his wands in preference to those on offer in their native lands. Mr Ollivander grew up in the family business, in which he showed precocious talent. He had the ambition of improving upon the cores and wand woods hitherto used and from his earliest days conceived a single-minded, even fanatical, determination in his pursuit of the ideal wand.

Prior to Mr Ollivander's proprietorship of the family business, wizards used a wide variety of wand cores. A customer would often present the wandmaker with a magical substance to which they were attached, or had inherited, or by which their family swore (hinted at by the core of Fleur Delacour's wand). Mr Ollivander, however, was a purist who insisted that the best wands would never be produced merely by encasing the whiskers of a favourite Kneazle (or the stalk of a Dittany plant that once saved a wizard's father from poisoning, or the mane of a kelpie a witch had once met on holiday in Scotland) in the customer's favourite wood. The best wands, he believed, had cores of immensely powerful magical substances, which were expertly enclosed in specially selected and complementary wandwoods, the result to be matched to an owner with whom the wand itself felt the most affinity. While there was initially substantial resistance to this revolutionary way of crafting wands, it swiftly became clear that Ollivander wands were infinitely superior to anything that had come before. His methods of locating wand woods and core substances marrying them together and matching them to ideal owners are all jealously guarded secrets that were coveted by rival wandmakers.

Wand woods

The following description of the powers and properties of various wand woods are taken from notes made, over a long career, by Mr Garrick Ollivander, widely considered the best wandmaker in the world. As will be seen, Mr Ollivander believes that wand wood has almost human powers of perception and preferences. Mr Ollivander introduces his notes on wand woods thus:

„Every single wand is unique and will depend for its character on the

particular tree and magical creature from which it derives its materials. Moreover, each wand, from the moment it finds its ideal owner, will begin to learn from and teach its human partner. Therefore, the following must be seen as general notes on each of the wood types I like to work with best, and ought not to be taken to describe any individual wand.

Only a minority of trees can produce wand quality wood (just as a minority of humans can produce magic). It takes years of experience to tell which ones have the gift, although the job is made easier if Bowtruckles are found nesting in the leaves, as they never inhabit mundane trees. The following notes on various wand woods should be regarded very much as a starting point, for this is the study of a lifetime, and I continue to learn with every wand I make and match."

Acacia

A very unusual wand wood, which I have found creates tricky wands that often refuse to produce magic for any but their owner, and also withhold their best effects from all but those most gifted. This sensitivity renders them difficult to place, and I keep only a small stock for those witches or wizards of sufficient subtlety, for acacia is not suited to what is commonly known as 'bangs-and-smells' magic. When well-matched, an acacia wand matches any for power, though it is often underrated due to the peculiarity of its temperament.

Alder

Alder is an unyielding wood, yet I have discovered that its ideal owner is not stubborn or obstinate, but often helpful, considerate and most likeable. Whereas most wand woods seek similarity in the characters of those they will best serve, alder is unusual in that it seems to desire a nature that is, if not precisely opposite to its own, then certainly of a markedly different type. When an alder wand is happily placed, it becomes a magnificent, loyal helpmate. Of all wand types, alder is best suited to non-verbal spell work, whence comes its reputation for being suitable only for the most advanced witches and wizards.

Apple

Applewood wands are not made in great numbers. They are powerful and best suited to an owner of high aims and ideals, as this wood mixes poorly with Dark magic. It is said that the possessor of an apple wand will be well-loved and long-lived, and I have often noticed that customers of great personal charm find their perfect match in an applewood wand. An unusual ability to converse with other magical beings in their native tongues is often found among apple wand owners, who include the celebrated author of Merpeople: A Comprehensive Guide to Their Language and Customs, Dylan Marwood.

Ash

The ash wand cleaves to its one true master and ought not to be passed on or gifted from the original owner, because it will lose power and skill. This tendency is extreme if the core is of unicorn. Old superstitions regarding wands rarely bear close examination, but I find that the old rhyme regarding rowan, chestnut, ash and hazel wands (rowan gossips, chestnut drones, ash is stubborn, hazel moans) contains a small nugget of truth. Those witches and wizards best suited to ash wands are not, in my experience, lightly swayed from their beliefs or purposes. However, the brash or over-confident witch or wizard who often insists on trying wands of this prestigious wood, will be disappointed by its effects. The ideal owner may be stubborn, and will certainly be courageous, but never crass or arrogant.

Aspen

Wand-quality aspen wood is white and fine-grained, and highly prized by all wand- makers for its stylish resemblance to ivory and its usually outstanding charm work. The proper owner of the aspen wand is often an accomplished duellist, or destined to be so, for the aspen wand is one of those particularly suited to martial magic. An infamous and secretive eighteenth-century duelling club, which called itself The Silver Spears, was reputed to admit only those who

owned aspen wands. In my experience, aspen wand owners are generally strong-minded and determined, more likely than most to be attracted by quests and new orders. This is a wand for revolutionaries.

Beech

The true match for a beech wand will be, if young, wise beyond his or her years, and if full-grown, rich in understanding and experience. Beech wands perform very weakly for the narrow-minded and intolerant. Such wizards and witches, having obtained a beech wand without having been suitable matched (yet coveting this most desirable, richly hued and highly prized wand wood), have often presented themselves at the homes of learned wandmakers such as myself, demanding to know the reason for their handsome wand's lack of power. When properly matched, the beech wand is capable of a subtlety and artistry rarely seen in any other wood, hence its lustrous reputation.

Blackthorn

Blackthorn, which is a very unusual wand wood, has the reputation, in my view well- merited, of being best suited to a warrior. This does not necessarily mean that its owner practises the Dark Arts (although it is undeniable that those who do so will enjoy the blackthorn wand's prodigious power); one finds blackthorn wands among the Aurors as well as among the denizens of Azkaban. It is a curious feature of the blackthorn bush, which sports wicked thorns, which it produces its sweetest berries after the hardest frosts, and the wands made from this wood appear to need to pass through danger or hardship with their owners to become truly bonded. Given this condition, the blackthorn wand will become as loyal and faithful a servant as one could wish.

Black Walnut

Less common than the standard walnut wand, that of black walnut seeks a master of good instincts and powerful insight. Black walnut is a very handsome wood, but not the easiest to master. It has one pronounced quirk, which is that it is abnormally attuned to inner conflict, and loses power dramatically if its possessor practises any form of self- deception. If the witch or wizard is unable or unwilling to be honest with themselves or others, the wand often fails to perform adequately and must be matched with a new owner if it is to regain its former prowess. Paired with a sincere, self-aware owner, however, it becomes one of the most loyal and impressive wands of all, with a particular flair in all kinds of charm work.

Cedar

Whenever I meet one who carries a cedar wand, I find strength of character and unusual loyalty. My father, Gewaise Ollivander, used always to say, 'you will never fool the cedar carrier, ' and I agree: the cedar wand finds its perfect home where there is perspicacity and perception. I would go further than my father, however, in saying that I have never yet met the owner of a cedar wand whom I would care to cross, especially if harm is done to those of whom they are fond. The witch or wizard who is well-matched with cedar carries the potential to be a frightening adversary, which often comes as a shock to those who have thoughtlessly challenged them.

Cherry

This very rare wand wood creates a wand of strange power, most highly prized by the wizarding students of the school of Mahoutokoro in Japan, where those who cherry wands have special prestige. The Western wand-purchaser should dispel from their minds any notion that the pink blossom of the living tree makes for a frivolous or merely ornamental wand, for cherry wood often makes a wand that possesses truly lethal power, whatever the core, but if teamed with dragon heartstring, the wand ought never to be teamed with a wizard without exceptional self-control and strength of mind.

Chestnut

This is a most curious, multi-faceted wood, which varies greatly in its character depending on the wand core, and takes a great deal of colour from the personality that possesses it. The wand of chestnut is attracted to witches and wizards who are skilled tamers of magical beasts, those who possess great gifts in Herbologv, and those who are natural fliers. However, when paired with dragon heartstring, it may find its best match among those who are overfond of luxury and material things, and less scrupulous than they should be about how they are obtained. Conversely, three successive heads of the Wizengamot have possessed chestnut and unicorn wands, for this combination shows a predilection for those concerned with all manner of justice.

Cypress

Cypress wands are associated with nobility. The great medieval wandmaker, Geraint Ollivander, wrote that he was always honoured to match a cypress wand, for he knew he was meeting a witch or wizard who would die a heroic death. Fortunately, in these less blood-thirsty times, the possessors of cypress wands are rarely called upon to lay down their lives, though doubtless many of them “To do so if required. Wands of cypress find their soul mates among the brave, the bold and the self-sacrificing: those who are unafraid to confront the shadows in their and others’ natures.

Dogwood

Dog-wood is one of my personal favourites, and I have found that matching a Dog-wood wand with its ideal owner is always entertaining. Dog-wood wands are quirky and mischievous; they have playful natures and insist upon partners who can provide them with scope for excitement and fun. It would be quite wrong, however, to deduce from this that dog-wood wands are not capable of serious magic when called upon to do so; they have been known to perform outstanding spells under difficult conditions, and when paired with a suitably clever and ingenious witch or wizard, can produce dazzling enchantments. An interesting foible of many dog-wood wands is that they refuse to perform non-verbal spells as they are often rather noisy.

Ebony

This jet-black wand wood has an impressive appearance and reputation, being highly suited to all manner of combative magic, and to Transfiguration. Ebony is happiest in the hand of those with the courage to be themselves. Frequently non-conformist, highly individual or comfortable with the status of

outsider, ebony wand owners have been found both among the ranks of the Order of the Phoenix and among the Death Eaters. In my experience the ebony wand's perfect match is one who will hold fast to his or her beliefs, no matter what the external pressure, and will not be swayed lightly from their purpose.

Elder

The rarest wand wood of all, and reputed to be deeply unlucky, the elder wand is trickier to master than any other. It contains powerful magic, but scorns to remain with any owner who is not the superior of his or her company; it takes a remarkable wizard to keep the elder wand for any length of time. The old superstition, 'wand of elder, never prosper, ' has its basis in this fear of the wand, but in fact, the superstition is baseless, and those foolish wandmakers who refuse to work with elder do so more because they doubt they will be able to sell their products than from fear of working with this wood. The truth is that only a highly unusual person will find their perfect match in elder, and on the rare occasion when such a pairing occurs, I take it as certain that the witch or wizard in question is marked out for a special destiny. An additional fact that I have unearthed during my long years of study is that the owners of elder wands almost always feel a powerful affinity with those chosen by rowan.

Elm

The unfounded belief that only pure-bloods can produce magic from elm wands was undoubtedly started by some elm wand owner seeking to prove his blood credentials, for I have known perfect matches of elm wands who are Muggle-borns. The truth is that elm wands prefer owners with presence, magical dexterity and a certain native dignity. Of all wand woods, elm, in my experience, produces the fewest accidents, the least foolish errors, and the most elegant charms and spells; these are sophisticated wands, capable of highly advanced magic in the right hands (which, again, makes it highly desirable to those who espouse the pure-blood philosophy).

English Oak

A wand for good times and bad, this is a friend as loyal as the wizard who deserves it. Wands of English oak demand partners of strength, courage and fidelity. Less well-known is the propensity for owners of English oak wands to have powerful intuition, and, often, an affinity with the magic of the natural world, with the creatures and plants that are necessary to wizardkind for both magic and pleasure. The oak tree is called King of the Forest from the winter solstice up until the summer solstice, and its wood should only be collected during that time (holly becomes King as the days begin to shorten again, and so holly should only be gathered as the year wanes. This divide is believed to be the origin of the old superstition, "when his wand's oak and hers is holly, then to marry would be folly," a superstition that I have found baseless). It is said that Merlin's wand was of English oak (though his grave has never been found, so this cannot be proven).

Fir

My august grandfather, Gerbold Octavius Ollivander, always called wands of this wood 'the survivor's wand, ' because he had sold it to three wizards who subsequently passed through mortal peril unscathed. There is no doubt that this

wood, coming as it does from the most resilient of trees, produces wands that demand staying power and strength of purpose in their true owners, and that they are poor tools in the hands of the changeable and indecisive. Fir wands are particularly suited to Transfiguration, and favour owners of focused, strong-minded and, occasionally, intimidating demeanour.

Hawthorn

The wandmaker Gregorovitch wrote that hawthorn 'makes a strange, contradictory wand, as full of paradoxes as the tree that gave it birth, whose leaves and blossoms heal, and yet whose cut branches smell of death.' While I disagree with many of Gregorovitch's conclusions, concur about hawthorn wands, which are complex and intriguing in their natures, just like the owners who best suit them. Hawthorn wands may be particularly suited to healing magic, but they are also adept at curses, and I have generally observed that the hawthorn wand seems most at home with a conflicted nature, or with a witch or wizard passing through a period of turmoil. Hawthorn is not easy to master, however, and I would only ever consider placing a hawthorn wand in the hands of a witch or wizard of proven talent, or the consequences might be dangerous. Hawthorn wands have a notable peculiarity: their spells can, when badly handled, backfire.

Hazel

A sensitive wand, hazel often reflects its owner's emotional state, and works best for a master who understands and can manage their feelings. Others should be very careful handling a hazel wand if its owner has recently lost their temper , or suffered a serious disappointment, because the wand will absorb such energy and discharge it unpredictably. The positive aspect of a hazel wand more than makes up for such minor discomforts, however, for it is capable of outstanding magic in the hands of the skillful, and is so devoted to its owner that it often 'wilts' (which is to say, it expels all its magic and refuses to perform, often necessitating the extraction of the core and its insertion into another casing, if the wand is still required) at the end of its master's life (if the core is unicorn hair, however, there is no hope; the wand "ill almost certainly have 'died'). Hazel wands also have the unique ability to detect water underground, and will emit silvery , tear-shaped puffs of smoke if passing over concealed springs and wells.

Holly

Holly is one of the rarer kinds of wand woods; traditionally considered protective, it works most happily for those who may need help overcoming a tendency to anger and impetuosity. At the same time, holly wands often choose owners who are engaged in some dangerous and often spiritual quest. Holly is one of those woods that varies most dramatically in performance depending on the wand core, and it is a notoriously difficult wood to team with phoenix feather, as the wood's volatility conflicts strangely with the phoenix' s detachment. In the unusual event of such a pairing finding its ideal match, however, nothing and nobody should stand in their way.

Hornbeam

My own wand is made of hornbeam, and so it is with all due modesty that I state that hornbeam selects for its life mate the talented witch or wizard with a single, pure passion, which some might call obsession (though I prefer the term 'vision'), which will almost always be realised. Hornbeam wands adapt more quickly than almost any other to their owner's style of magic, and "ill become so personalised, so quickly, that other people will find them extremely difficult to use even for the most simple of spells. Hornbeam wands likewise absorb their owner's code of honour, whatever that might be, and will refuse to perform acts - whether for good or ill - that do not tally with their master's principles. A particularly fine-tuned and sentient wand.

Larch

Strong, durable and warm in colour, larch has long been valued as an attractive and powerful wand wood. Its reputation for instilling courage and confidence in the user has ensured that demand has always outstripped supply. This much sought-after wand is, however, hard to please in the matter of ideal owners, and trickier to handle than many imagine. I find that it always creates wands of hidden talents and unexpected effects, which likewise describes the master who deserves it. It is often the case that the witch or wizard who belongs to the larch wand may never realise the full extent of their considerable talents until paired with it, but that they will then make an exceptional match.

Laurel

It is said that a laurel wand cannot perform a dishonourable act, although in the quest for glory (a not uncommon goal for those best suited to these wands), I have known laurel wands perform powerful and sometimes lethal magic. Laurel wands are sometimes called fickle, but this is unfair. The laurel wand seems unable to tolerate laziness in a possessor , and it is in such conditions that it is most easily and willingly won away. Otherwise, it will cleave happily to its first match forever, and indeed has the unusual and engaging attribute of issuing a spontaneous lightning strike if another witch or wizard attempts to steal it.

Maple

I have often found that those chosen by maple wands are by nature travellers and explorers; they are not stay-at-home wands, and prefer ambition in their witch or wizard, their magic grows heavy and lacklustre. Fresh challenges and regular changes of scene cause this wand to literally shine, burnishing itself as it grows, with its partner, in ability and status. This is a beautiful and desirable wood, and wand quality maple has been among the most costly for centuries. Possession of a maple wand has long been a mark of status, because of its reputation as the wand of high achievers.

Pear

This golden-toned wood produces wands of splendid magical powers, which give off their best in the hands of the warm-hearted, the generous and the wise. Possessors of pear wands are, in my experience, usually popular and well-respected. I do not know of a single instance where a pear wand has been

discovered in the possession of a Dark witch or wizard. Pear wands are among the most resilient, and I have often observed that they may still present a remarkable appearance of newness, even after many years of hard use.

Pine

The straight-grained pine wand always chooses an independent, individual master who may be perceived as a loner, intriguing and perhaps mysterious. Pine wands enjoy being used creatively, and unlike some others, will adapt unprotestingly to new methods and spells. Many wandmakers insist that pine wands are able to detect, and perform best for, owners who are destined for long lives, and I can confirm this in as much as I have never personally known the master of a pine wand to die young. The pine wand is one of those that is most sensitive to non-verbal magic.

Poplar

"If you seek integrity, search first among the poplars," was a great maxim of my grandfather, Gerbold Ollivander, and my own experience of poplar wands and their owners tallies exactly with his. Here is a wand to rely upon, of consistency, strength and uniform power, always happiest when working with a witch or wizard of clear moral vision. There is a tired old joke among lesser wandmakers that no poplar wand has ever chosen a politician, but here they show their lamentable ignorance: of the Ministry's most accomplished Ministers for Magic, Eldritch Diggory and Evangeline Orpington, were the possessors of fine, Ollivander-made poplar wands.

Redwood / Red Oak

Wand-quality redwood is in short supply, yet constant demand, due to its reputation for bringing good fortune to its owner. As is usually the case with wandlore, the general populace have the truth back to front: redwood wands are not themselves lucky, but are strongly attracted to witches and wizards who already possess the admirable ability to fall on their feet, to make the right choice, to snatch advantage from catastrophe. The combination of such a witch or wizard with a redwood wand is always intriguing, and I generally expect to hear of exciting exploits when I send this special pairing out from my workshop.

Rowan

Rowan wood has always been much-favoured for wands, because it is reputed to be more protective than any other, and in my experience renders all manner of defensive charms especially strong and difficult to break. It is commonly stated that no Dark witch or wizard ever owned a rowan wand, and I cannot recall a single instance where one of my rowan wands has gone on to do evil in the world. Rowan is most happily placed with the clear-headed and the pure-hearted, but this reputation for virtue ought not to fool anyone - these wands are the equal of any, often the better, and frequently out-perform others in duels.

Silver lime

This unusual and highly attractive wand wood was greatly in vogue in the nineteenth century. Demand outstripped supply , and unscrupulous wandmakers dyed substandard woods in an effort to fool purchasers into believing that they

had purchased silver lime. The reasons for these wands' desirability lay not only in their unusually handsome appearance, but also because they had a reputation for performing best for Seers and those skilled in Legilimency, mysterious arts both, which consequently gave the possessor of a silver lime wand considerable status. When demand was at its height, wandmaker Arturo Cephalopos claimed that the association between silver lime and clairvoyance was 'a falsehood circulated by merchants like Gerbold Ollivander (my grandfather), who have overstocked their workshops with silver lime and hope to shift their surplus.' But Cephalopos was a slipshod wandmaker and an ignoramus, and nobody, Seer or not, was surprised when he went out of business.

Spruce

Unskilled wandmakers call spruce a difficult wood, but in doing so they reveal their ineptitude. It is quite true that it requires particular deftness to work with spruce, which produces wands that are ill-matched with cautious or nervous natures, and become positively dangerous in fumbling fingers. The spruce wand requires a firm hand, because it often appears to have its own ideas about what magic it ought to be called upon to produce. However, when a spruce wand meets its match - which, in my experience, is a bold spell-caster with a good sense of humour - it becomes a superb helper, intensely loyal to their owners and capable of producing particularly flamboyant and dramatic effects.

Sycamore

The sycamore makes a questing wand, eager for new experience and losing brilliance if engaged in mundane activities. It is a quirk of these handsome wands that they may combust if allowed to become 'bored,' and many witches and wizards, settling down into middle age, are disconcerted to find their trusty wand bursting into flame in their hand as they ask it, one more time, to fetch their slippers. As may be deduced, the sycamore's ideal owner is curious, vital and adventurous, and when paired with such an owner, it demonstrates a capacity to learn and adapt that earns it a rightful place among the world's most highly-prized wand woods.

Vine

The druids considered anything with a woody stem as a tree, and vine makes wands of such a special nature that I have been happy to continue their ancient tradition. Vine wands are among the less common types, and I have been intrigued to notice that their owners are nearly always those witches or wizards who seek a greater purpose, who have a vision beyond the ordinary and who frequently astound those who think they know them best. Vine wands seem strongly attracted by personalities with hidden depths, and I have found them more sensitive than any other when it comes to instantly detecting a prospective match. Reliable sources claim that these wands can emit magical effects upon the mere entrance into their room of a suitable owner, and I have twice observed the phenomenon in my own shop.

Walnut

Highly intelligent witches and wizards ought to be offered a walnut wand for trial first, because in nine cases out of ten, the two will find in each other their

ideal mate. Walnut wands are often found in the hands of magical innovators and inventors; this is a handsome wood possessed of unusual versatility and adaptability. A note of caution, however: while some woods are difficult to dominate, and may resist the performance of spells that are foreign to their natures, the walnut wand will, once subjugated, perform any task its owner desires, provided that the user is of sufficient brilliance. This makes for a truly lethal weapon in the hands of a witch or wizard of no conscience, for the wand and the wizard may feed from each other in a particularly unhealthy manner.

Willow

Willow is an uncommon wand wood with healing power, and I have noted that the ideal owner for a willow wand often has some (usually unwarranted) insecurity, however well they may try and hide it. While many confident customers insist on trying a willow wand (attracted by their handsome appearance and well-founded reputation for enabling advanced, non-verbal magic) my willow wands have consistently selected those of greatest potential, rather than those who feel they have little to learn. It has always been a proverb in my family that he who has furthest to travel will go fastest with willow.

Yew

Yew wands are among the rarer kinds, and their ideal matches are likewise unusual, and occasionally notorious. The wand of yew is reputed to endow its possessor with the power of life and death, which might, of course, be said of all wands; and yet yew retains a particularly dark and fearsome reputation in the spheres of duelling and all curses. However, it is untrue to say (as those unlearned in wandlore often do) that those who use yew wands are more likely to be attracted to the Dark Arts than another. The witch or wizard best suited to a yew wand might equally prove a fierce protector of others. Wands hewn from these most long-lived trees have been found in the possession of heroes quite as often as of villains. Where wizards have been buried with wands of yew, the wand generally sprouts into a tree guarding the dead owner's grave. What is certain, in my experience, is that the yew wand never chooses either a mediocre or a timid owner.

Wand Lengths and Flexibility

The following notes on wand length and flexibility are taken from notes on the subject by Mr Garrick Ollivander, wandmaker.

„Many wandmakers simply match the wand length to the size of the witch or wizard who will use it, but this is a crude measure, and fails to take into account many other, important considerations. In my experience, longer wands might suit taller wizards, but they tend to be drawn to bigger personalities, and those of a more spacious and dramatic style of magic. Neater wands favour more elegant and refined spell-casting. However, no single aspect of wand composition should be considered in isolation of all the others, and the type of wood, the core and the flexibility may either counterbalance or enhance the attributes of the wand's length.

Most wands will be in the range of between nine and fourteen inches. I have sold extremely short wands (eight inches and under) and very long wands (over fifteen inches), these are exceptionally rare. In the latter case, a physical peculiarity demanded the excessive wand length. However, abnormally short wands usually select those in whose character something is lacking, rather than because they are physically undersized (many small witches and wizards are chosen by longer wands).

Wand flexibility or rigidity denotes the degree of adaptability and willingness to change possessed by the wand-and-owner pair - although, again, this factor ought not to be considered separately from the wand wood, core and length, nor of the owner's life experience and style of magic, all of which will combine to make the wand in question unique."

Wand Cores

The following description of the powers and properties of the three main wand cores used by Mr Garrick Ollivander are taken from his notes.

„Early in my career, as I watched my wandmaker father wrestling with substandard wand core materials such as kelpie hair, I conceived the ambition to discover the finest cores and to work only with those when my time came to take over the family business. This I have done. After much experimentation and research, I concluded that only three substances produce wands of the quality to which I am happy to give the illustrious name of Ollivander: unicorn hair, dragon heartstring and phoenix feather. Each of these costly and rare materials has its own distinct properties. The

following represents a short summary of my researches into each of the three Supreme Cores. Readers should bear in mind that each wand is the composite of its wood, its core and the experience and nature of its owner; that tendencies of each may counterbalance or outweigh the other; so this can only be a very general overview of an immensely complex subject."

Unicorn

Unicorn hair generally produces the most consistent magic, and is least subject to fluctuations and blockages. Wands with unicorn cores are generally the most difficult to turn to the Dark Arts. They are the most faithful of all wands, and usually remain strongly attached to their first owner, irrespective of whether he or she was an accomplished witch or wizard.

Minor disadvantages of unicorn hair are that they do not make the most powerful wands (although the wand wood may compensate) and that they are prone to melancholy if seriously mishandled, meaning that the hair may 'die' and need replacing.

Dragon

As a rule, dragon heartstrings produce wands with the most power, and which are capable of the most flamboyant spells. Dragon wands tend to learn more quickly than other types. While they can change allegiance if won from their original master, they always bond strongly with the current owner.

The dragon wand tends to be easiest to turn to the Dark Arts, though it will not incline that way of its accord. It is also the most prone of the three cores to accidents, being somewhat temperamental.

Phoenix

This is the rarest core type. Phoenix feathers are capable of the greatest range of magic, though they may take longer than either unicorn or dragon cores to reveal this. They show the most initiative, sometimes acting of their accord, a quality that many witches and wizards dislike.

Phoenix feather wands are always the pickiest when it comes to potential owners, for the creature from which they are taken is one of the most independent and detached in the world. These wands are the hardest to tame and to personalise, and their allegiance is usually hard won.

The Hogwarts Express

As we know from early historical accounts, and from the evidence of early woodcuts and engravings, Hogwarts students used to arrive at school in any manner that caught their fancy. Some rode broomsticks (a difficult feat when carrying trunks and pets); others commandeered enchanted carts and, later, carriages; some attempted to Apparate (often with disastrous effects, as the castle and grounds have always been protected with Anti-Apparition Charms), others rode a variety of magical creatures.

In spite of the accidents attendant on these various modes of magical transport, not to mention the annual Muggle sightings of vast numbers of airborne wizards travelling northwards, it remained the responsibility of parents to convey their children to school, right up until the imposition of the International Statute of Secrecy in 1692. At this point, it became a matter of urgency to find some more discreet method of transporting hundreds of wizarding children from all over Britain to their secret school in the Highlands of Scotland.

Portkeys were therefore arranged at collecting points all over Britain. The logistics caused problems from the start. Up to a third of students would fail to arrive every year, having missed their time slot, or been unable to find the unobtrusive enchanted object that would transport them to their school. There was also the unfortunate fact that many children were (and are) 'Portkey-sick', and the hospital wing was frequently full to bursting for the first few days of every year, while susceptible students overcame their hysterics and nausea.

While admitting that Portkeys were not an ideal solution to the problem of school transportation, the Ministry of Magic failed to find an acceptable alternative. A return to the unregulated travel of the past was impossible, and yet a more secure route into the school (for instance, permitting a fireplace that might be officially entered by Floo powder) was strongly resisted by successive Headmasters, who did not wish the security of the castle to be breached.

A daring and controversial solution to the thorny problem was finally suggested by Minister for Magic Ottaline Gambol, who was much intrigued by Muggle inventions and saw the potential in trains. Where exactly the Hogwarts Express came from has never been conclusively proven, although it is a fact that there are secret records at the Ministry of Magic detailing a mass operation involving one hundred and sixty-seven Memory Charms and the largest ever mass

Concealment Charm performed in Britain. The morning after these alleged crimes, a gleaming scarlet steam engine and carriages astounded the villagers of Hogsmeade (who had also not realised they had a railway station), while several bemused Muggle railway workers down in Crewe spent the rest of the year grappling with the uncomfortable feeling that they had mislaid something important.

The Hogwarts Express underwent several magical modifications before the Ministry approved it for school use. Many pure-blood families were outraged at the idea of their children using Muggle transport, which they claimed was unsafe, insanitary and demeaning; however, as the Ministry decreed that students either rode the train or did not attend school, the objections were swiftly silenced.

Platform Nine and Three-Quarters

In choosing the number of the concealed platform that would take young witches and wizards to boarding school, I decided that it would have to be a number between those of the Muggle platforms - therefore, it was clearly a fraction. This raised the interesting question of how many other fractional platforms lay between the whole-numbered platforms at King's Cross, and I concluded that were probably quite a few. Although these are never mentioned in the book, I like to think that it is possible to take a version of the Orient Express off to wizard-only villages in continental Europe (try platform seven and a half), and that other platforms may be opened on an as-required-basis, for instance for large, one-off events such as Celestina Warbeck concerts (see your ticket for details).

"The number nine and three-quarters presented itself without much conscious thought, and I liked it so much that I took it at once. It is the 'three-quarters' that makes it, of course."

Toads

Of the three approved animals permitted to students as pets at Hogwarts, the toad is, and has been for many years now, by far the least popular. Centuries ago, in blood-thirstier times, when young witches and wizards were expected to personally pop out the newt eyes they were using in potions, they routinely brought boxes of toads to school for use in potions and in other charms. Over time, as the Ministry of Magic introduced legislation regarding animal cruelty (sub-sections 13-29 inclusive relate to potion ingredients and their

production) such practices were gradually outlawed. The toad, never much appreciated for its own personal appeal, gradually appeared (alive) less and less frequently at Hogwarts, unless hopping and swimming wild in the grounds.

By the time Harry arrived at Hogwarts, possession of a pet toad conveyed neither cool nor status; indeed, it was something of an embarrassment. Trevor, Neville's toad, had nothing to commend him except a propensity for getting lost, and when he finally slipped off to join his brethren in the Hogwarts lake, both owner and pet felt a sense of relief."

The toad has a long association with witchcraft, and was often believed to be a familiar. It occupies a special place in old folk cures, particularly (perhaps on the homeopathic principle of curing like with like) in the curing of warts. In the Dark Ages, a British toad could think itself lucky if it died of natural causes, because it was in constant danger of being boiled, powdered, skinned or tied around a sick human's neck in a bag.

Professor McGonagall

Birthday 4 October

Wand Ash, dragon heartstring, nine and a half inches, stiff

Hogwarts House Gryffindor

Special Abilities Animagus (distinctively marked silver tabby cat)

Parentage Scottish father (Robert McGonagall), witch mother (Isobel Ross)

Family Married Elphinstone Urquhart, deceased. No children. Brothers Malcolm and Robert Jr.

Hobbies Inauguration Today, watching Quidditch, supporting the Montrose Magpies

Childhood

Minerva McGonagall was the first child, and only daughter, of a Scottish Presbyterian minister and a Hogwarts-educated witch. She grew up in the Highlands of Scotland in the early twentieth century, and only gradually became aware that there was something strange, both about her own abilities, and her parents' marriage.

Minerva's father, the Reverend Robert McGonagall, had become captivated by the high-spirited Isobel Ross, who lived in the same village. Like his neighbours, Robert believed that Isobel attended a secret ladies' boarding school in England. In fact, when Isobel vanished from her home for months at a time, it was to Hogwarts

School of Witchcraft and Wizardry that she went.

Aware that her parents (a witch and wizard) would frown on a connection with the serious young Muggle, Isobel kept their burgeoning relationship a secret. By the time she was eighteen, she had fallen in love with Robert. Unfortunately, she had not found the courage to tell him what she was.

The couple eloped, to the fury of both sets of parents. Now estranged from her family, Isobel could not bring herself to mar the bliss of the honeymoon by telling her smitten new husband that she had graduated top of her class in Charms at Hogwarts, nor that she had been Captain of the school Quidditch team. Isobel and Robert moved into a manse (minister's house) on the outskirts of Caithness, where the beautiful Isobel proved surprisingly adept at making the most of the minister's tiny salary.

The birth of the young couple's first child, Minerva, proved both a joy and a crisis. Missing her family, and the magical community she had given up for love, Isobel insisted on naming her newborn daughter after her own grandmother, an immensely talented witch. The outlandish name raised eyebrows in the community in which she lived, and the Reverend Robert MeGonagall found it difficult to explain his wife's choice to his parishioners. Furthermore, he was alarmed by his wife's moodiness. Friends assured him that women were often emotional after the birth of a baby, and that Isobel would soon be herself again.

Isobel, however, became more and more withdrawn, often secluding herself with Minerva for days at a time. Isobel later told her daughter that she had displayed small, but unmistakable, signs of magic from her earliest hours. Toys that had been left on upper shelves were found in her cot. The family cat appeared to do her bidding before she could talk. Her father's bagpipes were occasionally heard to play themselves from distant rooms, a phenomenon that made the infant Minerva chuckle.

Isobel was torn between pride and fear. She knew that she must confess the truth to Robert before he witnessed something that would alarm him. At last, in response to Robert's patient questioning, Isobel burst into tears, retrieved her wand from the locked box under her bed and showed him what she was.

Although Minerva was too young to remember that night, its aftermath left her with a bitter understanding of the complications of growing up with magic in a Muggle world. Although Robert McGonagall loved his wife no less upon discovering that she was a witch, he was profoundly shocked by her revelation, and by the fact that she had kept such a secret from him for so long. What was more, he, who prided himself on being an upright honest man, was now

drawn into a life of secrecy that was quite foreign to his nature. Isobel explained, through her sobs, that she (and their daughter) were bound by the International Statute of Secrecy, and that they must conceal the truth about themselves, or face the fury of the Ministry of Magic. Robert also quailed at the thought of how the locals - in the main, an austere, straight-laced and conventional breed - would feel about having a witch as their Minister's wife.

Love endured, but trust had been broken between her parents, and Minerva, a clever and observant child, saw this with sadness. Two more children, both sons, were born to the McGonagalls, and both, in due course, revealed magical ability. Minerva helped her mother explain to Malcolm and Robert Junior that they must not flaunt their magic, and aided her mother in concealing from their father the accidents and embarrassments their magic sometimes caused.

Minerva was very close to her Muggle father, whom in temperament she resembled more than her mother. She saw with pain how much he struggled with the family's strange situation. She sensed too, how much of a strain it was on her mother to fit in with the all-Muggle village, and how much she missed the freedom of being with her own kind, and of not exercising her considerable talents. Minerva never forgot how much her mother cried, when the letter of admittance into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry arrived on Minerva's eleventh birthday; she knew that Isobel was sobbing, not only out of pride, but also of envy.

School Career

As is often the case where the young witch or wizard comes from a family who has struggled with its magical identity, Hogwarts was, for Minerva McGonagall, a place of joyful release and freedom.

Minerva drew unusual attention to herself on the very first evening, when she was revealed to be a Hatstall. After five and a half minutes, the Sorting Hat, which had been vacillating between the houses of Ravenclaw and Gryffindor, placed Minerva in the latter (in later years, this circumstance was a subject of gentle humour between Minerva and her colleague Filius Flitwick, over whom the Sorting Hat suffered the same confusion, but reached the opposite conclusion. The two Heads of house were amused to think that they might, but for those crucial moments in their youths, have exchanged positions).

Minerva was quickly recognised as the most outstanding student of her year, with a particular talent for Transfiguration, As she progressed through the school, she demonstrated that she had inherited both her mother's talents and her father's cast-iron moral sense. Minerva's school career overlapped by two years with that by Pomona Sprout, later the Head of Hufflepuff House, and the two

women enjoyed an excellent relationship both then, and in later years.

By the end of her education at Hogwarts, Minerva McGonagall had achieved an impressive record: top grades in O.W.L.s and N.E.W.T.s, Prefect, Head Girl, and winner of the Transfiguration Today Most Promising Newcomer award. Under the guidance of her inspirational Transfiguration teacher, Albus Dumbledore, she had managed to become an Animagus; her animal form, with its distinctive markings (tabby cat, square spectacles markings around the eyes) were duly logged into the Ministry of Magic's Animagus Registry. Minerva was also, like her mother, a gifted Quidditch player although a nasty fall in her final year (a foul during the Gryffindor versus Slytherin game which would decide the Cup winner) left her with a concussion, several broken ribs and a lifelong desire to see Slytherin crushed on the Quidditch pitch. Though she gave up Quidditch on leaving Hogwarts, the innately competitive Professor McGonagall later took a keen interest in the fortunes of her house team, and retained a keen eye for Quidditch talent.

Early Heartbreak

Upon graduation from Hogwarts, Minerva returned to the manse to enjoy one last summer with her family before setting out for London, where she had been offered a position at the Ministry of Magic (Department of Magical Law Enforcement). These months were to prove some of the most difficult of Minerva's life, for it was then, aged only eighteen, that she proved herself truly her mother's daughter, by falling head-over-heels in love with a Muggle boy.

It was the first and only time in Minerva McGonagall's life that she might have been said to lose her head. Dougal McGregor was the handsome, clever and funny son of a local farmer. Though less beautiful than Isobel, Minerva was clever and witty. Dougal and Minerva shared a sense of humour, argued fiercely, and suspected mysterious depths in each other. Before either of them knew it, Dougal was on one knee in a ploughed field, proposing, and Minerva was accepting him.

She went home, intending to tell her parents of her engagement, yet found herself unable to do so. All that night she lay awake, thinking about her future. Dougal did not know what she, Minerva, truly was, any more than her father had known the truth about Isobel before they had married. Minerva had witnessed at close quarters the kind of marriage she might have if she wed Dougal. It would be the end of all her ambitions; it would mean a wand locked away, and children taught to lie, perhaps even to their own father. She did not fool herself that Dougal McGregor would accompany her to London, while she went to work every day at the Ministry. He was looking

forward to inheriting his father's farm.

Early next morning, Minerva slipped from her parents' house and went to tell Dougal that she had changed her mind, and could not marry him. Mindful of the fact that if she broke the International Statute of Secrecy she would lose the job at the Ministry for which she was giving him up, she could give him no good reason for her change of heart. She left him devastated, and set out for London three days later.

Ministry Career

Though undoubtedly her feelings for the Ministry of Magic were coloured by the fact that she had recently suffered an emotional crisis, Minerva McGonagall did not much enjoy her new home and workplace. Some of her co-workers had an engrained anti-Muggle bias which, given her adoration of her Muggle father, and her continuing love for Dougal McGregor, she deplored. Though a most efficient and gifted employee, and fond of her much older boss, Elphinstone Urquart, Minerva was unhappy in London, and found that she missed Scotland. Finally, after two years at the Ministry, she was offered a prestigious promotion, yet found herself turning it down. She sent an owl to Hogwarts, asking whether she might be considered for a teaching post. The owl returned within hours, offering her a job in the Transfiguration department, under Head of Department, Albus Dumbledore.

Friendship with Albus Dumbledore

The school greeted Minerva McGonagall's return with delight. Minerva threw herself into her work, proving herself a strict but inspirational teacher. If she kept letters from Dougal McGregor locked in a box under her bed, this was (she told herself firmly) better than keeping her wand locked there. Nevertheless, it was a shock to learn from the oblivious Isobel (in the middle of a chatty letter of local news) that Dougal had married the daughter of another farmer.

Albus Dumbledore discovered Minerva in tears in her classroom late that evening, and she confessed the whole story to him. Albus Dumbledore offered both comfort and wisdom, and told Minerva some of his own family history, previously unknown to her. The confidences exchanged that night between two intensely private and reserved characters were to form the basis of a lasting mutual esteem and friendship.

Marriage

Through all her early years at Hogwarts, Minerva McGonagall remained on terms of friendship with her old boss at the Ministry, Elphinstone Urquart. He came to visit her while on holiday to

Scotland, and to her great surprise and embarrassment, proposed marriage in Madam Puddifoot's teashop. Still in love with Dougal McGregor, Minerva turned him down.

Elphinstone, however, had never ceased to love her, nor to propose every now and then, even though she continued to refuse him. The death of Dougal McGregor, however, although traumatic, seemed to free Minerva. Shortly after Voldemort's first defeat, Elphinstone, now white-haired, proposed again during a summertime stroll around the lake in the Hogwarts grounds. This time Minerva accepted. Elphinstone, now retired, was beside himself with joy, and purchased a small cottage in Hogsmeade for the pair of them, whence Minerva could travel easily to work every day.

Known to successive generations of students as 'Professor McGonagall', Minerva - always something of a feminist - announced that she would be keeping her own name upon marriage. Traditionalists sniffed - why was Minerva refusing to accept a pure-blood name, and keeping that of her Muggle father?

The marriage (cut tragically short, though it was destined to be) was a very happy one. Though they had no children of their own, Minerva's nieces and nephews (children of her brothers Malcolm and Robert) were frequent visitors to their home. This was a period of great fulfillment for Minerva.

The accidental death of Elphinstone from a Venomous Tentacula bite, three years into their marriage, was an enormous sorrow to all who knew the couple. Minerva could not bear to remain alone in their cottage, but packed her things after Elphinstone's funeral and returned to her sparse stone-floored bedroom in Hogwarts Castle, accessible through a concealed door in the wall of her first-floor study. Always a very brave and private person, she poured all her energies into her work, and few people - excepting perhaps Albus Dumbledore - ever realised how much she suffered.

Minerva was the Roman goddess of warriors and wisdom. William McGonagall is celebrated as the worst poet in British history. There was something irresistible to me about the name, and the idea that such a brilliant woman might be a distant relative of the buffoonish McGonagall.

A small sample of his work will give a flavour of its unintentional comedic value. The following was written as part of a poem commemorating a Victorian railway disaster:

Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silv'ry Tay!
Alas! I am very sorry to say
That ninety lives have been taken away
On the last Sabbath day of 1879,
Which will be remember'd for a very long time.

Hatstall

An archaic Hogwarts term for any new student whose Sorting takes longer than five minutes. This is an exceptionally long time for the Sorting Hat to deliberate, and occurs rarely, perhaps once every fifty years.

Of Harry Potter's contemporaries, Hermione Granger and Neville Longbottom came closest to being Hatstalls. The Sorting Hat spent nearly four minutes trying to decide whether it should place Hermione in Ravenclaw or Gryffindor. In Neville's case, the Hat was determined to place him in Gryffindor: Neville, intimidated by that house's reputation for bravery, requested a placing in Hufflepuff. Their silent wrangling resulted in triumph for the Hat.

The only true Hatstalls known personally to Harry Potter were Minerva McGonagall and Peter Pettigrew. The former caused the hat to agonise for five and a half minutes as to whether Minerva ought to go to Ravenclaw or Gryffindor; the latter was placed in Gryffindor after a long deliberation between that house and Slytherin. The Sorting Hat, which is infamously stubborn, still refuses to accept that its decision in the case of the latter may have been erroneous, citing the manner in which Pettigrew died as (dubious) evidence.

The Sorting Hat

The famous Hogwarts Sorting Hat gives an account of its own genesis in a series of songs sung at the beginning of each school year. Legend has it that the hat once belonged to one of the four founders, Godric Gryffindor, and that it was jointly enchanted by all four founders to ensure that students would be sorted into their eponymous houses, which would be selected according to each founder's particular preferences in students. "The Sorting Hat is one of the cleverest enchanted objects most witches and wizards will ever meet. It literally contains the intelligence of the four founders, can speak (through a rip near its brim) and is skilled at Legilimency, which enables it to look into the wearer's head and divine his or her capabilities or mood. It can even respond to the thoughts of the wearer.

The Sorting Hat is notorious for refusing to admit it has made a mistake in its sorting of a student. On those occasions when Slytherins behave altruistically or selflessly, when Ravenclaws flunk all their

exams, when Hufflepuffs prove lazy yet academically gifted and when Gryffindors exhibit cowardice, the Hat steadfastly backs its original decision. On balance, however, the Hat has made remarkably few errors of judgement over the many centuries it has been at work.

The Sorting Hat does not appear in my earliest plans for Hogwarts. I debated several different methods for sorting students (because I knew from early on that there would be four houses, all with very different qualities). The first was an elaborate, Heath Robinson-ish machine that did all kinds of magical things before reaching a decision, but I did not like it: it felt at once too complicated, and too easy. Next I placed four statues of the four founders in the Entrance Hall, which came alive and selected students from the throng in front of them while the school watched. This was better, but still not quite right. Finally, I wrote a list of the ways in which people can be chosen: eeny meeny miny mo, short straws, chosen by team captains, names out of a hat - names out of a talking hat - putting on a hat - the Sorting Hat.

Hogwarts School Subjects

All first-years at Hogwarts must take seven subjects: Transfiguration, Charms, Potions, History of Magic, Defence Against the Dark Arts, Astronomy and Herbology. Flying lessons (on broomsticks) are also compulsory.

At the end of their second year at Hogwarts, students are required to choose a minimum of two more subjects from the following list: Arithmancy, Muggle Studies, Divination, Study of Ancient Runes and Care of Magical Creatures.

Very specialised subjects such as Alchemy are sometimes offered in the final two years, if there is sufficient demand.

A slightly different list of school subjects appears in my earliest notes. Herbology is called ‘Herbalism’, Divination is compulsory from the first year, as are Alchemy and a subject called simply ‘Beasts’, whereas Transfiguration is called ‘Transfiguration/Metamorphosis’

The Original Forty

Two of my most prized possessions are a pair of small notebooks, which contain my very first scribblings about Harry Potter. Much of what is written in them was never used in the series, although it is startling to come across the odd line of dialogue that subsequently

made it, verbatim, to publication.

In one of the books is a list of forty names of students in Harry's year (including Harry, Ron and Hermione), all allocated houses, with small symbols beside each name depicting each boy or girl's parentage.

While I imagined that there would be considerably more than forty students in each year at Hogwarts, I thought that it would be useful to know a proportion of Harry's classmates, and to have names at my fingertips when action was taking place around the school.

As the stories evolved, I changed the parentage of some of the original forty. While some never appeared in the books at all, I always knew that they were there; some had surgery to their names after their first creation; a few emerged from the background to have their own secondary stories (Ernie Macmillan, Hannah Abbott, Justin Finch-Fletchley), and one, Neville Longbottom, developed into a very important character. It is very strange to look at the list in this tiny notebook now, slightly water-stained by some forgotten mishap, and covered in light pencil scribblings (undoubtedly the work of my then infant daughter, Jessica), and to think that while I was writing these names, and refining them, and sorting them into houses, I had no clue where they were going to go (or where they were going to take me).

Here, then, are the original forty:

•

- *Abbott, Hannah*
- *Bones, Susan*
- *Boot, Trevor*
- *Brocklehurst, Mandy*
- *Brown, Lavender*
- *Bulstrode, Millicent*
- *Corner, Michael*
- *Cornfoot, Stephen*
- *Crabbe, Vincent*
- *Davis, Tracey*
- *Entwhistle, Kevin*
- *Finch-Fletchley, Justin*
- *Finnigan, Seamus*
- *Goldstein, Anthony*
- *Goyle, Gregory*
- *Granger, Hermione - inserted in pencil, see crossed-out entry, below*
- *Greengrass, Queenie*
- *Hopkins, Wayne*
- *Jones, Megan*
- *Li, Sue*
- *Longbottom, Neville - inserted in ink, see crossed out entry, below*
- *MacDougal, Isobel [original name Katrina crossed out]*

- *Macmillan, Ernest*
- *Malfoy, Draco - inserted in ink, see crossed-out entry, below*
- *Malone, Roger*
- *Moon, Lily [first intimation of Luna Lovegood, this name was never used, but gave me an idea for a fey, dreamy girl. She was named before I decided on Harry's mother's name.]*
- *Nott, Theodore*
- *Parkinson, Pansy*
- *Patel, Madhari*
- *Patel, Mati*
- *Perks, Sally-Anne*
- *Potter, Harry*
- *[Puckle, Hermione - crossed out, name changed and reinserted, above]*
- *[Puff, Neville - crossed out, name changed and reinserted, above]*
- *[Quirrel], crossed out, subsequently used for teacher]*
- *Rivers, Oliver*
- *Roper, Sophie*
- *[Sidebottom, Neville crossed out]*
- *Smith, Sally [Georgina crossed out]*
- *[Spungen, changed to Spinks, Draco, all crossed out, re-inserted above]*
- *Thomas, Gary*
- *Turpin, Lisa*
- *Weasley, Ronald*

- *Zabini, Blaise*

Curses and Counter-Curses

Curses and Counter-Curses, by Professor Vindictus Viridian, is a spellbook which contains jinxes and curses.

The Tickling Spell:
Point your wand directly at your enemy and shout ‘Titillando!’
The Full-Body Bind:
Point your wand directly at your enemy and shout ‘Petrificus Totalus!’
Tongue-Tying Spell:
Point your wand directly at your enemy and shout ‘Mimble Wimble!’
The Leg-Locker Curse:
Point your wand directly at your enemy and shout ‘Locomotor Mortis!’
Jelly-Legs Curse:
Point your wand directly at your enemy and shout ‘Locomotor Wibbly!’

The Mirror of Erised

The Mirror of Erised is a very old device. Nobody knows who created it, or how it came to be at Hogwarts School. A succession of teachers have brought back interesting artefacts from their travels, so it might have arrived at the castle in this casual manner, either because the teacher knew how it worked and was intrigued by it, or because they did not understand it and wished to ask their colleagues' opinions.

The Mirror of Erised is one of those magical artefacts that seems to have been created in a spirit of fun (whether innocent or malevolent is a matter of opinion), because while it is much more revealing than a normal mirror, it is interesting rather than useful. Only after Professor Dumbledore makes key modifications to the mirror (which has been languishing in the Room of Requirement for a century or so before he brings it out and puts it to work) does it become a superb hiding place, and the final test for the impure of heart.

The mirror's inscription ('erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi') must be read backwards to show its true purpose."

Albus Dumbledore's words of caution to Harry when discussing the Mirror of Erised express my own views. The advice to 'hold on to your dreams' is all well and good, but there comes a point when holding on to your dreams becomes unhelpful and even unhealthy. Dumbledore knows that life can pass you by while you are clinging on to a wish that can never be - or ought never to be - fulfilled. Harry's deepest yearning is for something impossible: the return of his parents. Desperately sad though it is that he has been deprived of his family, Dumbledore knows that to sit gazing on a vision of what he can never have, will only damage Harry. The mirror is bewitching and tantalising, but it does not necessarily bring happiness

Nicholas Flamel

Nicolas Flamel was a real person. I read about him in my early twenties when I came across one of the versions of his life story. It told how he had bought a mysterious book called The Book of Abraham the Jew, which was full of strange symbols and which Flamel realised were instructions on alchemy. The story went that he subsequently made it his life's work to produce the Philosopher's

Stone.

The real Flamel was a wealthy businessman and a noted philanthropist. There are streets in Paris named after him and his wife, Perenelle.

I remember having a highly detailed and exceptionally vivid dream about Flamel, several months into the writing of Philosopher's Stone, which was like a renaissance painting come to life. Flamel was leading me around his cluttered laboratory, which was bathed in golden light, and showing me exactly how to make the Stone (I wish I could remember how to do it).

Textbooks

The Standard Book of Spells, Grade 1

Charms differ from Transfiguring Spells in the following manner: a charm adds certain properties to an object or creature, whereas a transfiguring spell will change it into something utterly different.

The lesser charms are not very difficult to break and many of those that you learn as a young wizard will wear off in a matter of days or even hours.

Dark charms are known as jinxes, hexes and curses. This book does not deal with such spells.

Lapses in concentration while charming can result in painful side effects - remember Wizard Baruffio, who said 's' instead of 'f' and found himself lying on the floor with a buffalo on his chest.

Some charms will be ineffective on large creatures such as trolls, whose hides repel all but the most powerful spells.

A Beginner's Guide to Transfiguration

When Transfiguring, it is important to make firm and decisive wand movements. Do not wiggle or twirl your wand unnecessarily, or the Transfiguration will certainly be unsuccessful.

Form a clear mental picture of the object you are hoping to create before attempting a Transfiguring spell.

Beginners should say the spell clearly. More advanced wizards do not need to say the spell aloud.

Incomplete Transfigurations are difficult to put right, but you must attempt to do so. Leaving the head of a rabbit on a footstool is irresponsible and dangerous. Say 'Reparifarge!' and the object or creature should return to its natural state.

Larger creatures are difficult to Transfigure except by skilled and powerful wizards. Know your limits.

One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi

Dittany is a powerful healing herb and restorative and may be eaten raw to cure shallow wounds.

Flobberworm mucus is a popular potion thickener.

Aconite is sometimes called monkshood or wolfsbane.

Moly is a powerful plant that can be eaten to counteract enchantments. It is a black-stemmed plant with white flowers.

The cry of the Mandrake is fatal to anyone who hears it.

The Wiggentree is a magical rowan that will protect anyone touching its trunk from the attack of Dark creatures.

The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection

Werewolf bites should be thoroughly and magically cleaned, as the werewolf's fangs are venomous. However, there is no cure once you have become a werewolf, so try and avoid being bitten at all costs.

Avoid the Red Cap, a Dark dwarfish creature that lurks in places where blood has been shed and will attempt to bludgeon the unwary to death.

The Zombie dwells only in the Southern part of America. It is an example, like the Vampire, of the Living Dead and may be recognised by its greyish colour and its rotten smell.

The hag is a child-eating creature of human appearance, though likely to have more warts than the average witch.

Professor Quirrell

Birthday	September
Wand	[illegible] and unicorn hair, nine inches long, bendy
Hogwarts House	[illegible]
Special Abilities	[illegible] theory of Defensive Magic, less adept in the practise
Parentage	[illegible]
Family	[illegible] married, no children
Hobbies	[illegible] pressing wild flowers

Harry's first Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher is a clever young wizard who took a 'Grand Tour' around the world before taking up his teaching post at Hogwarts. When Harry first meets Quirrell, he has adopted a turban for everyday wear. His nerves, expressed most obviously in his stammer, are so pronounced that it is rumoured the turban is stuffed full of garlic, to ward off vampires.

I saw Quirrell as a gifted but delicate boy, who would probably have been teased for his timidity and nerves during his school life.

Feeling inadequate and wishing to prove himself, he developed an (initially theoretical) interest in the Dark Arts. Like many people who feel themselves to be insignificant, even laughable, Quirrell had a latent desire to make the world sit up and notice him.

Quirrell set out deliberately to find whatever remained of the Dark wizard, partly out of curiosity, partly out of that unacknowledged desire for importance. At the very least, Quirrell fantasised that he could be the man who tracked Voldemort down, but at best, might learn skills from Voldemort that would ensure he was never laughed at again.

Though Hagrid was correct in saying that Quirrell had a 'brilliant mind,' the Hogwarts teacher was both naive and arrogant in thinking that he would be able to control an encounter with Voldemort, even in the Dark wizard's weakened state. When Voldemort realised that the young man had a position at Hogwarts, he took immediate possession of Quirrell, who was incapable of resisting.

While Quirrell did not lose his soul, he became completely subjugated by Voldemort, who caused a frightful mutation of Quirrell's body: now Voldemort looked out of the back of Quirrell's head and directed his movements, even forcing him to attempt murder. Quirrell tried to put up feeble resistance on occasion, but Voldemort was far too strong for him.

Quirrell is, in effect, turned into a temporary Horcrux by Voldemort. He is greatly depleted by the physical strain of fighting the far stronger, evil soul inside him. Quirrell's body manifests burns and blisters during his fight with Harry due to the protective power Harry's mother left in his skin when she died for him. When the body Voldemort and Quirrell are sharing is horribly burned by contact with Harry, the former flees just in time to save himself, leaving the damaged and enfeebled Quirrell to collapse and die.

Quirinus was a Roman God about whom there is not much information, although he is commonly associated with war - a clue that Quirrell is not quite as meek as he appears. 'Quirrel,' which is so nearly 'squirrel' - small, cute and harmless - also suggested 'quivery,' a nod to the character's innate nervousness.

The Philosopher's Stone

I did not invent the concept of the Philosopher's Stone, which is a legendary substance that was once believed to be real, and the true goal of alchemy.

The properties of ‘my’ Philosopher’s Stone conform to most of the attributes the ancients ascribed to it. The Stone was believed to turn base metals into gold, and also to produce the Elixir of Life, which could make you immortal. ‘Genuine’ alchemists - the forerunners of chemists and physicists - such as Sir Isaac Newton and (the real) Nicolas Flamel, sought, sometimes over lifetimes, to discover the secret of its creation.

The Stone is variously described as red and white in the many old texts in which it appears. These colours are important in most accounts of alchemy, and are often interpreted as having symbolic meaning.

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

Technology

When you can summon any book, instrument or animal with a wave of the wand and the word ‘Accio!’; when you can communicate with friends and acquaintances by means of owl, fire, Patronus, Howler, enchanted objects such as coins, or Apparate to visit them in person; when your newspaper has moving pictures and everyday objects sometimes talk to you, then the internet does not seem a particularly exciting place. This is not to say that you will never find a witch or wizard surfing the net; merely that they will generally be doing so out of slightly condescending curiosity, or else doing research in the field of Muggle Studies. “While they have no need of mundane domestic objects such as dishwashers or vacuum cleaners, some members of the magical community are amused by Muggle television, and a few firebrand wizards even went so far, in the early eighties, as to start a British Wizarding Broadcasting Corporation, in the hope that they would be able to have their own television channel. The project foundered at an early stage, as the Ministry of Magic refused to countenance the broadcasting of wizarding material on a Muggle device, which would (it was felt) almost guarantee serious breaches of the International Statute of Secrecy.

Some felt, and with justification, that this decision was inconsistent and unfair, as many radios have been legally modified by the wizarding community for their own use, which broadcast regular wizarding programmes. The Ministry conceded that Muggles frequently catch snippets of advice on, for instance, how to prune a Venomous Tentacula, or how best to remove gnomes from a cabbage bed, but argued that the radio-listening Muggle population seems altogether more tolerant, gullible, or less convinced of their own good sense, than Muggle TV viewers. Reasons for this anomaly are examined at length in Professor Mordicus Egg’s *The Philosophy of the Mundane: Why the Muggles Prefer Not to Know*. Professor Egg argues cogently that Muggles are much more likely to believe they have misheard something than that they are hallucinating.

There is another reason for most wizards’ avoidance of Muggle devices, and that is cultural. The magical community prides itself on the fact that it does not need the many (admittedly ingenious) devices that Muggles have created to enable them to do what can be so easily done by magic. To fill one’s house with tumble dryers and telephones would be seen as an admission of magical inadequacy.

There is one major exception to the general magical aversion to

Muggle technology, and that is the car (and, to a lesser extent, motorbikes and trains). Prior to the introduction of the International Statute of Secrecy, wizards and Muggles used the same kind of everyday transport: horse-drawn carts and sailing ships among them. The magical community was forced to abandon horse-drawn vehicles when they became glaringly outmoded. It is pointless to deny that wizardkind looked with great envy upon the speedy and comfortable automobiles that began filling the roads in the twentieth century, and eventually even the Ministry of Magic bought a fleet of cars, modifying them with various useful charms and enjoying them very much indeed. Many wizards love cars with a child-like passion, and there have been cases of pure-bloods who claim never to touch a Muggle artefact, and yet are discovered to have a flying Rolls Royce in their garage. However, the most extreme anti-Muggles eschew all motorised transport; Sirius Black's love of motorbikes incensed his hard-line parents.

Floo Powder

Floo powder was invented by Ignatia Wildsmith in the thirteenth century. Its manufacture is strictly controlled. The only licensed producer in Britain is Floo-Pow, a company whose Headquarters is in Diagon Alley, and who never answer their front door.

No shortage of Floo powder has ever been reported, nor does anybody know anyone who makes it. Its price has remained constant for one hundred years: two Sickles a scoop. Every wizard household carries a stock of Floo powder, usually conveniently located in a box or vase on the mantelpiece.

The precise composition of Floo powder is a closely guarded secret. Those who have tried to 'make their own' have been universally unsuccessful. At least once a year, St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries reports what they call a 'Faux Floo' injury – in other words, somebody has thrown a homemade powder onto a fire and suffered the consequences. As irate Healer and St Mungo's spokeswizard, Rutherford Poke, said in 2010: 'It's two Sickles a scoop, people, so stop being cheap, stop throwing powdered Runespoor fangs on the fire and stop blowing yourselves out of the chimney! If one more wizard comes in here with a burned backside, I swear I won't treat him. It's two Sickles a scoop!'

Celestina Warbeck

Birth: 1947
Wand: [illegible] and phoenix feather, 10½ inches long, flexible
House: Hufflepuff
Special abilities: [illegible] to drown out a chorus of banshees, tap-dancing, fancy baking
Family: Muggle father, Muggle mother
Hobbies: [illegible] in fabulous style, breeding rough-coated Crups, relaxing in any of her eight homes

Internationally-acclaimed singing sensation Celestina Warbeck (sometimes known as 'the Singing Sorceress') hails from Wales. Her father, a minor functionary in the Muggle Liaison Office, met her Muggle mother (a failed actress) when the latter was attacked by a Lethifold disguised as a stage curtain.

Celestina's extraordinary voice was apparent from an early age. Disappointed to learn that there was no such thing as a wizarding stage school, Mrs Warbeck reluctantly consented to her daughter's enrolment at Hogwarts, but subsequently bombarded the school with letters urging the creation of a choir, theatre club and dancing class to showcase her daughter's talents.

Frequently appearing with a chorus of backing banshees, Celestina's concerts are justly famous. Three devoted fans were involved in a nasty three-broom pile up over Liverpool while trying to reach the last night of her 'Flighty Aphrodite' tour, and her tickets often appear on the black market at vastly inflated prices (one reason why Molly Weasley has never yet seen her favourite singer live).

Celestina has sometimes lent her name and talents to good causes, such as raising funds for St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries with a recording of Puddlemere United's anthem Beat Back Those Bludgers, Boys, and Chuck That Quaffle Here. More controversially, Celestina was vocal in her disagreement when the Ministry of Magic sought to impose restrictions on how the wizarding community was allowed to celebrate Hallowe'en.

Some of Celestina's best-known songs include You Charmed the Heart Right Out of Me and A Cauldron Full of Hot, Strong Love. Her fans are usually older people who love her grandstanding style and powerful voice. The late 20th-century album You Stole My Cauldron but You Can't Have My Heart was a massive global hit.

Celestina's personal life has provided much fodder for the gossip columns of the Daily Prophet. An early marriage to a backing dancer

lasted only a year; Celestina then married her manager, with whom she had a son, only to leave him for the composer Irving Warble ten years later.

Celestina is one of my favourite 'off-stage' characters in the whole series, and has been part of the Potter world ever since its inception, making an early appearance in the short-lived 'Daily Prophet' series I produced for members of the equally short-lived fan club run by my British publisher, Bloomsbury. Although we never lay eyes on Celestina during the whole seven volumes of the Potter books, I always imagined her to resemble Shirley Bassey in both looks and style. I stole her first name from a friend with whom I worked, years ago, at Amnesty International's Headquarters in London; 'Celestina' was simply begging to be scooped up and attached to a glamorous witch.

The Malfoy Family

The Malfoy name comes from old French and translates as 'bad faith'. Like many other progenitors of noble English families, the wizard Armand Malfoy arrived in Britain with William the Conqueror as part of the invading Norman army. Having rendered unknown, shady (and almost certainly magical) services to King William I, Malfoy was given a prime piece of land in Wiltshire, seized from local landowners, upon which his descendants have lived for ten consecutive centuries.

Their wily ancestor Armand encapsulated many of the qualities that have distinguished the Malfoy family to the present day. The Malfoys have always had the reputation, hinted at by their not altogether complimentary surname, of being a slippery bunch, to be found courting power and riches wherever they might be found. In spite of their espousal of pure-blood values and their undoubtedly genuine belief in wizards' superiority over Muggles, the Malfoys have never been above ingratiating themselves with the non-magical community when it suits them. The result is that they are one of the richest wizarding families in Britain, and it has been rumoured for many years (though never proven) that over the centuries the family has dabbled successfully in Muggle currency and assets. Over hundreds of years, they have managed to add to their lands in Wiltshire by annexing those of neighbouring Muggles, and the favour they curried with royalty added Muggle treasures and works of art to an ever-expanding collection.

Historically, the Malfoys drew a sharp distinction between poor Muggles and those with wealth and authority. Until the imposition of the Statute of Secrecy in 1692, the Malfoy family was active within high-born Muggle circles, and it is said that their fervent opposition to the imposition of the Statute was due, in part, to the fact that they would have to withdraw from this enjoyable sphere of social life. Though hotly denied by subsequent generations, there is ample evidence to suggest that the first Lucius Malfoy was an unsuccessful aspirant to the hand of Elizabeth I, and some wizarding historians allege that the Queen's subsequent opposition to marriage was due to a jinx placed upon her by the thwarted Malfoy.

"With that healthy degree of self-preservation that has characterised most of their actions over the centuries, once the Statute of Secrecy had passed into law the Malfoys ceased fraternising with Muggles, however well-born, and accepted that further opposition and protests could only distance them from the new heart of power: the newly created Ministry of Magic. They performed an abrupt volte-face, and became as vocally supportive of the Statute as any of those who had championed it from the beginning, hastening to deny that they had ever been on speaking (or marrying) terms with Muggles.

The substantial wealth at their disposal ensured them considerable (and much resented) influence at the Ministry for generations to come, though no Malfoy has ever aspired to the role of Minister for Magic. It is often said of the Malfoy family that you will never find one at the scene of the crime, though their fingerprints might be all over the guilty wand. Independently wealthy, with no need to work for a living, they have generally preferred the role of power behind the throne, happy for others to do the donkey work and to take the responsibility for failure. They have helped finance many of their preferred candidates' election campaigns, which have (it is alleged) included paying for dirty work such as hexing the opposition.

The Malfoys' unfeigned contempt for all Muggles who could not offer them jewels or influence, and for the majority of their fellow wizards, drew them naturally towards the pure-blood doctrine, which seemed for several years in the twentieth century to be their likeliest source of untrammelled power. From the imposition of the Statute of Secrecy onwards, no Malfoy has married a Muggle or Muggle-born. The family has, however, eschewed the somewhat dangerous practice of inter-marrying within such a small pool of pure-bloods that they become enfeebled or unstable, unlike a small minority of fanatic families such as the Gaunts and Lestranges, and many a half-blood appears on the Malfoy family tree.

Notable Malfoys of past generations include the fourteenth-century Nicholas Malfoy, who is believed to have dispatched many a fractious

Muggle tenant under the guise of the Black Death, though escaping censure by the Wizards' Council; Septimus Malfoy, who was greatly influential at the Ministry in the late eighteenth century, many claiming that Minister for Magic Unctuous Osbert was little more than his puppet; and Abraxas Malfoy, who was widely believed to be part of the shady plot that saw the first Muggle-born Minister (Nobby Leach) leave his post prematurely in 1968 (nothing was ever proven against Malfoy).

Abraxas's son, Lucius, achieved notoriety as one of Lord Voldemort's Death Eaters, though he successfully evaded prison after both Lord Voldemort's attempted coups. On the first occasion, he claimed to have been acting under the Imperius Curse (though many claimed he called in favours from high-placed Ministry officials); on the second occasion, he provided evidence against fellow Death Eaters and helped ensure the capture of many of Lord Voldemort's followers who had fled into hiding

King's Cross Station

When Ottaline Gambol commandeered a Muggle train to serve as the new mode of transport for Hogwarts students, she also had constructed a small station in the wizarding village of Hogsmeade: a necessary adjunct to the train. The Ministry of Magic felt strongly, however, that to construct an additional wizarding station in the middle of London would stretch even the Muggles' notorious determination not to notice magic when it was exploding in front of their faces.

It was Evangeline Orpington, Minister from 1849-1855, who hit upon the solution of adding a concealed platform at the newly (Muggle) built King's Cross station, which would be accessible only to witches and wizards. On the whole, this has worked well, although there have been minor problems over the ensuing years, such as witches and wizards who have dropped suitcases full of biting spellbooks or newt spleens all over the polished station floor, or else disappeared through the solid barrier a little too loudly. There are usually a number of plain-clothed Ministry of Magic employees on hand to deal with any inconvenient Muggle memories that may need altering at the start and end of each Hogwarts term

King's Cross, which is one of London's main railway stations, has a very personal significance for me, because my parents met on a train to Scotland which departed from King's Cross station. For this reason, and because it has such an evocative and symbolic name, and because

it is actually the right station to leave from if you were heading to Caledonia, I never knew the slightest indecision about the location of the portal that would take Harry to Hogwarts, or the means of transport that would take him there.

It is said (though where the story originated I could not tell you; it is suspiciously vague) that King's Cross station was built either on the site of Boudicca's last battle (Boudicca was an ancient British queen who led a rebellion against the Romans) or on the site of her tomb. Legend has it that her grave is situated somewhere in the region of platforms eight to ten. I did not know this when I gave the wizards' platform its number. King's Cross station takes its name from a now-demolished monument to King George IV.

There is a real trolley stuck halfway out of a wall in King's Cross now, and it makes me beam proudly every time I pass….

Pure-Blood

The term 'pure-blood' refers to a family or individual without Muggle (non-magic) blood. The concept is generally associated with Salazar Slytherin, one of the four founders of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, whose aversion to teaching anybody of Muggle parentage eventually led to a breach with his three fellow founders, and his resignation from the school.

Slytherin's discrimination on the basis of parentage was considered an unusual and misguided view by the majority of wizards at the time. Contemporary literature suggests that Muggle-borns were not only accepted, but often considered to be particularly gifted. They went by the affectionate name of 'Magbobs' (there has been much debate about the origin of the term, but it seems most likely to be that in such a case, magic 'bobbed up' out of nowhere).

Magical opinion underwent something of a shift after the International Statute of Secrecy became effective in 1692, when the magical community went into voluntary hiding following persecution by Muggles. This was a traumatic time for witches and wizards, and marriages with Muggles dropped to their lowest level ever known, mainly because of fears that intermarriage would lead inevitably to discovery, and, consequently, to a serious infraction of wizarding law. 1

Under such conditions of uncertainty, fear and resentment, the pure-blood doctrine began to gain followers. As a general rule, those who adopted it were also those who had most strenuously opposed the International Statute of Secrecy, advocating instead outright war on

the Muggles. Increasing numbers of wizards now preached that marriage with a Muggle did not merely risk a possible breach of the new Statute, but that it was shameful, unnatural and would lead to 'contamination' of magical blood. [2]

As Muggle/wizard marriage had been common for centuries, those now self-describing as pure-bloods were unlikely to have any higher proportion of wizarding ancestors than those who did not. To call oneself a pure-blood was more accurately a declaration of political or social intent ('I will not marry a Muggle and I consider Muggle/wizard marriage reprehensible') than a statement of biological fact.

Several works of dubious scholarship, published around the early eighteenth century and drawing partly on the writings of Salazar Slytherin himself, make reference to supposed indicators of pure-blood status, aside from the family tree. The most commonly cited signs were: onset of magical ability before the age of three, early (before aged seven) prowess on a broomstick, dislike or fear of pigs and those who tend them (the pig is often considered a particularly non-magical animal and is notoriously difficult to charm), resistance to common childhood illnesses, outstanding physical attractiveness and an aversion to Muggles observable even in the pure-blood baby, which supposedly shows signs of fear and disgust in their presence.

Successive studies produced by the Department of Mysteries have proven that these supposed hallmarks of pure-blood status have no basis in fact. Nevertheless, many pure-bloods continue to cite them as evidence of their own higher status within the wizarding community.

In the early 1930s, a 'Pure-Blood Directory' was published anonymously in Britain, which listed the twenty-eight truly pure-blood families, as judged by the unknown authority who had written the book, [3] with 'the aim of helping such families maintain the purity of their bloodlines'. The so-called 'Sacred Twenty-Eight' comprised the families of:

•

- *Abbott*
- *Avery*
- *Black*
- *Bulstrode*
- *Burke*
- *Carrow*
- *Crouch*
- *Fawley*
- *Flint*
- *Gaunt*
- *Greengrass*
- *Lestrange*
- *Longbottom*
- *Macmillan*
- *Malfoy*
- *Nott*
- *Ollivander*
- *Parkinson*
- *Prewett*
- *Rosier*
- *Rowle*
- *Selwyn*
- *Shacklebolt*

- *Shafiq*
- *Slughorn*
- *Travers*
- *Weasley*
- *Yaxley*

A minority of these families publicly deplored their inclusion on the list, declaring that their ancestors certainly included Muggles, a fact of which they were not ashamed. Most vocally indignant was the numerous Weasley family, which, in spite of its connections with almost every old wizarding family in Britain, was proud of its ancestral ties to many interesting Muggles. Their protests earned these families the opprobrium of advocates of the pure-blood doctrine, and the epithet 'blood traitor'. Meanwhile, a larger number of families were protesting that they were not on the pure-blood list.

1, Over subsequent decades and centuries, the number of mixed marriages began to climb again until the healthy levels of today, and this has not led to widespread discovery of the hidden magical community. Professor Mordicus Egg, author of The Philosophy of the Mundane: Why the Muggles Prefer Not To Know, points out that Muggles in love generally do not betray their husbands or wives, and Muggles who fall out of love are jeered at by their own community when they assert that their estranged partner is a witch or wizard.

2, In fact, the reverse appears to be true. Where families adhered consistently to the practice of marrying within a very small group of fellow witches and wizards, mental and physical instability and weakness seems to result.

3, Widely believed to be Cantankerus Nott

Gilderoy Lockhart

Birthday 26th January

Wand Willow and dragon heartstring, nine inches, slightly bendy

House Ravenclaw

Special abilities Memory Charms; devised hair-care system involving Occamy egg yolks, which guaranteed 'locks of lustrous luminosity' (the shampoos were indeed effective, but too dangerous and expensive to produce for the mass market)

Parentage Muggle father, magical mother

Family Two Muggle sisters, no children

Hobbies Autographing photographs of self, relentless self-promotion

Early Life

Born to a witch mother and a Muggle father, with two older sisters, Gilderoy Lockhart was the only one of his parents' three

children to show magical ability. A clever, good-looking boy, he was his mother's unashamed favourite, and the realisation that he was also a wizard caused his vanity to blossom like a particularly pernicious weed.

School

The young Lockhart's arrival at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was not the triumph that he and his mother had expected. Somehow, Lockhart had not appreciated that he would be in a whole school full of witches and wizards, many of them more accomplished than himself. (In fact, he had visualized for himself an entrance into Hogwarts not unlike the one that Harry Potter experienced, decades later. He had imagined walking down the corridors to excited whispers of his magical prowess, it never having occurred to him that every student at Hogwarts had had similar experiences before starting school.) In Lockhart's own mind he was already a fully-fledged hero and genius, and it was a most unwelcome shock to discover that his name was unknown, his talents were unexceptional and that nobody was particularly impressed by his naturally wavy hair.

This is not to say that Lockhart had no talent. Indeed, his teachers felt that he was of above-average intelligence and ability, and that, with hard work, he might make something of himself, even if he fell short of the ambitions he shared freely with classmates (Lockhart told anyone who would listen that he would succeed in making a Philosopher's Stone before leaving school and that he intended to captain England's Quidditch team to World Cup glory, before knuckling down to becoming Britain's youngest Minister for Magic).

Sorted into Ravenclaw house, Lockhart was soon achieving good marks in his schoolwork, but there was always a kink in his nature that made him increasingly unsatisfied. If he was not first and best, he would rather not participate at all. Increasingly, he directed his talents towards short cuts and dodges. He valued learning not for its own sake, but for the attention it brought him. He craved prizes and awards. He lobbied the Headmaster to start a school newsletter, because he liked nothing better than to see his name and photograph in print. Never very popular, he nevertheless achieved his primary goal of school-wide recognition through repeated, attention-getting exploits. He received a week's worth of detentions for magically carving his signature in twenty-foot-long letters into the Quidditch pitch. He managed to create a massive, illuminated projection of his own face, which he would send skywards in imitation of the Dark Mark. He sent himself eight hundred Valentine's cards one year, which caused such a pile-up of owls in the Great Hall that breakfast had to

be abandoned (far too many feathers and droppings in the porridge).

Post-Hogwarts Career

When Lockhart finally left Hogwarts, it was to a faint sigh of relief from the staff. He was soon heard of in foreign parts, where his exploits began garnering increasing publicity. Many of his ex-teachers began to feel that they might have misjudged him because he was demonstrating both bravery and resilience in ridding various far-flung places of dangerous, Dark creatures.

The truth was that Lockhart had found his true calling at last. He had never been a bad wizard, only a lazy one, and he had decided to hone his talents in one direction: Memory Charms. By perfecting this tricky spell, he had succeeded in modifying the recollections of a dozen highly accomplished and courageous witches and wizards, allowing him to take credit for their daring exploits, returning to Britain at the end of each 'adventure' with a new book ready for publication which retold 'his' feats of bravery with a wealth of invented detail.

Within a decade of leaving school, Lockhart had achieved bestseller status with his series of autobiographical books and a reputation as a world-class defender against the Dark Arts. He even received the Order of Merlin, Third Class, became an Honorary Member of the Dark Force Defence League and – his good looks untarnished by the many life-and-death, tooth-and-claw battles he claimed to have had with werewolves, banshees and the like – won Witch Weekly's Most-Charming-Smile Award no less than five times in a row.

Return to Hogwarts

Many staff were baffled as to the reason that Albus Dumbledore chose to invite Gilderoy Lockhart back to Hogwarts as Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. While it was true that it had become almost impossible to persuade anybody else to take the job (the rumour that it was cursed was gathering strength both inside and outside Hogwarts), many teachers remembered Lockhart as thoroughly obnoxious, whatever his later achievements.

Albus Dumbledore's plans, however, ran deep. He happened to have known two of the wizards for whose life's work Gilderoy Lockhart had taken credit, and was one of the only people in the world who thought he knew what Lockhart was up to. Dumbledore was convinced that Lockhart needed only to be put back into an ordinary school setting to be revealed as a charlatan and a fraud. Professor McGonagall, who had never liked Lockhart, asked Dumbledore what he thought students would learn from such a vain, celebrity-hungry man. Dumbledore replied that 'there is plenty to be

learned even from a bad teacher: what not to do, how not to be'.

Lockhart might not have been keen to return to Hogwarts, given how well his career of stolen glory was progressing, had Dumbledore not dangled the promise of Harry Potter over his fame-hungry head (a ruse that Dumbledore was to repeat four years later, when another teacher needed to be persuaded to come back to school). By subtly suggesting that teaching Harry Potter would set the seal on Lockhart's fame, Dumbledore had set a lure that Lockhart could not resist.

By the time that he arrived at school, Lockhart's magical skills (once rather good) had become rusty almost beyond repair. The only spell for which he had real ability was the Memory Charm, which he had been using repeatedly for years. His classes quickly became a charade, as he was revealed to be completely inept at everything in which he claimed, in his books, to be expert.

The accident that cost Lockhart his sanity occurred at the end of his year at Hogwarts, when he was hit by a backfiring Memory Charm that forever erased his past. He has since resided in the Janus Thickey Ward of St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries.

An extract taken from a BBC Radio 4 interview with Stephen Fry and J.K. Rowling, recorded in the late summer of 2005 and broadcast as a Christmas special in December 2005:

Stephen Fry: *Now do you actually trawl through books of rare words or OED [Oxford English Dictionary] or things, or are they just things that you somehow, you've got a good memory for words?*

J.K. Rowling: *Um…I don't really trawl books. They tend to be things I've collected or stumbled across in general reading. The exception was Gilderoy – Gilderoy Lockhart. The name Lockhart, well, I know it's quite a well-known Scottish surname…*

SF: *Yeah.*

JKR: *…I found on a war memorial. I was looking for quite a glamorous, dashing sort of surname, and Lockhart caught my eye on this war memorial, and that was it. Couldn't find a Christian name. And I was leafing through the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable one night. I was consciously looking for stuff, generally, that would be useful and I saw Gilderoy, who was actually a highway man, and a very good-looking rogue.*

SF: *Really?*

JKR: *And Gilderoy Lockhart, it just sounded perfect.*

SF: *It is a perfect, perfect…*

JKR: *Impressive, and yet, in the middle, quite hollow, of course.*

SF: *Indeed, as we know, he was.*

JKR: *As we know.*

Peeves

The name 'poltergeist' is German in origin, and roughly translates as 'noisy ghost', although it is not, strictly speaking, a ghost at all. The poltergeist is an invisible entity that moves objects, slams doors and creates other audible, kinetic disturbances. It has been reported in many cultures and there is a strong association with the places where young people, especially adolescents, are living. Explanations for the phenomenon vary all the way from supernatural to scientific.

It was inevitable that, in a building bursting with teenage witches and wizards, a poltergeist would be generated; it was likewise to be expected that such a poltergeist would be noisier, more destructive and harder to expel than those that occasionally frequent Muggle houses. Sure enough, Peeves is the most notorious and troublesome poltergeist in British history. Unlike the overwhelming majority of his colleagues, Peeves has a physical form, though he is able to become invisible at will. His looks reflect his nature, which those who know him would agree is a seamless blend of humour and malice.

Peeves is well-named, for he has been a pet peeve of every Hogwarts caretaker from Hankerton Humble (appointed by the four founders) onwards. Though many students and even teachers have a somewhat perverse fondness for Peeves (he undoubtedly adds a certain zest to school life), he is incurably disruptive, and it generally falls to the caretaker of the day to clean up his many deliberate messes: vases smashed, potions upended, bookcases toppled and so on. Those with weak nerves deplore Peeves' fondness for suddenly materialising an inch from the end of their noses, hiding in suits of armour or dropping solid objects on their heads as they move between classes.

Several concerted efforts to remove Peeves from the castle have resulted in failure. The last and most disastrous was made in 1876 by caretaker Rancorous Carpe, who devised an elaborate trap, baited with an assortment of weapons he believed would be irresistible to Peeves, and a vast enchanted bell jar, reinforced by various

Containment Charms, which he intended to drop over the poltergeist once he was in place. Not only did Peeves break easily through the giant bell jar, showering an entire corridor with broken glass, he also escaped the trap armed with several cutlasses, crossbows, a blunderbuss and a miniature cannon. The castle was evacuated while Peeves amused himself by firing randomly out of the windows and threatening all and sundry with death. A three-day standoff was ended when the Headmistress of the day, Eupraxia Mole, agreed to sign a contract allowing Peeves additional privileges, such as a once-weekly swim in the boys' toilets on the ground floor, first refusal on stale bread from the kitchen for throwing purposes, and a new hat – to be custom-made by Madame Bonhabille of Paris. Rancorous Carpe took early retirement for health reasons, and no subsequent attempt has ever been made to rid the castle of its most ill-disciplined inhabitant.

Peeves does recognise authority of a sort. Though generally unimpressed by titles and badges, he is generally amenable to the strictures of the teachers, agreeing to stay out of their classrooms while they teach. He has also been known to show an affinity for rare students (notably Fred and George Weasley), and is certainly afraid of the ghost of Slytherin, the Bloody Baron.

Hogwarts Ghosts

Hogwarts is the most heavily haunted dwelling place in Britain (and this is against stiff competition, as there are more reported ghost sightings/sensings on these damp islands than anywhere else in the world). The castle is a congenial place for ghosts, because the living inhabitants treat their dead friends with tolerance and even affection, no matter how many times they have heard the same old reminiscences.

Each of the four Hogwarts houses has its own ghost. Slytherin boasts the Bloody Baron, who is covered in silver bloodstains. The least talkative of the house ghosts is the Grey Lady, who is long-haired and beautiful.

Hufflepuff house is haunted by the Fat Friar, who was executed because senior churchmen grew suspicious of his ability to cure the pox merely by poking peasants with a stick, and his ill-advised habit of pulling rabbits out of the communion cup. Though a genial character in general, the Fat Friar still resents the fact that he was never made a cardinal.

Gryffindor house is home to Nearly Headless Nick, who in life was Sir Nicholas de Mimsy-Porpington. Something of a snob, and a less

accomplished wizard than he believed, Sir Nicholas lounged around the court of Henry VII in life, until his foolish attempt to beautify a lady-in-waiting by magic caused the unfortunate woman to sprout tusks. Sir Nicholas was stripped of his wand and inexpertly executed, leaving his head hanging off by a single flap of skin and sinew. He retains a feeling of inadequacy with regard to truly headless ghosts.

Another notable Hogwarts ghost is Moaning Myrtle, who haunts an unpopular girls' toilet. Myrtle was a student at Hogwarts when she died, and she chose to return to school in perpetuity, with the short-term aim of haunting her arch-rival and bully, Olive Hornby. As the decades have rolled by, Myrtle has made a name for herself as the most miserable ghost in school, usually to be found lurking inside one of the toilets and filling the tiled space with her moans and howls."

The inspiration for Moaning Myrtle was the frequent presence of a crying girl in communal bathrooms, especially at the parties and discos of my youth. This does not seem to happen in male bathrooms, so I enjoyed placing Harry and Ron in such uncomfortable and unfamiliar territory in HARRY POTTER and the Chamber of Secrets and HARRY POTTER and the Half-Blood Prince.

The most productive ghost at Hogwarts is, of course, Professor Binns, the old History of Magic teacher who fell asleep in front of the staff-room fire one day and simply got up to give his next class, leaving his body behind. There is some debate as to whether or not Professor Binns realises he is dead. While his entrance to lessons through the blackboard is vaguely amusing the first time students see it, he is not the most stimulating teacher.

The inspiration for Professor Binns was an old professor at my university, who gave every lecture with his eyes closed, rocking backwards and forwards slightly on his toes. While he was a brilliant man, who disgorged an immense amount of valuable information at every lecture, his disconnect with his students was total. Professor Binns is only dimly aware of his living students, and is astonished when they begin asking him questions.

In the very earliest list of ghosts I ever wrote for Hogwarts, I included Myrtle (initially named 'Wailing Wanda'), Professor Binns, the Grey Lady (then called 'the Whispering Lady') and the Bloody Baron. There was also a Black Knight, The Toad (which left ectoplasm all over its classroom), and a ghost I rather regret not using: his name was Edmund Grubb, and the notes beside his name say: Expired in the doorway of the Dining Hall. Sometimes stops people getting in, out of spite. Fat Victorian ghost. (Ate poisonous berries).

Draco Malfoy

Draco Malfoy grew up as an only child at Malfoy Manor, the magnificent mansion in Wiltshire which had been in his family's possession for many centuries. From the time when he could talk, it was made clear to him that he was triply special: firstly as a wizard, secondly as a pure-blood, and thirdly as a member of the Malfoy family.

Draco was raised in an atmosphere of regret that the Dark Lord had not succeeded in taking command of the wizarding community, although he was prudently reminded that such sentiments ought not to be expressed outside the small circle of the family and their close friends 'or Daddy might get into trouble'. In childhood, Draco associated mainly with the pure-blood children of his father's ex-Death Eater cronies, and therefore arrived at Hogwarts with a small gang of friends already made, including Theodore Nott and Vincent Crabbe.

Like every other child of Harry Potter's age, Draco heard stories of the Boy Who Lived through his youth. Many different theories had been in circulation for years as to how Harry survived what should have been a lethal attack, and one of the most persistent was that Harry himself was a great Dark wizard. The fact that he had been removed from the wizarding community seemed (to wishful thinkers) to support this view, and Draco's father, wily Lucius Malfoy, was one of those who subscribed most eagerly to the theory. It was comforting to think that he, Lucius, might be in for a second chance of world domination, should this Potter boy prove to be another, and greater, pure-blood champion. It was, therefore, in the knowledge that he was doing nothing of which his father would disapprove, and in the hope that he might be able to relay some interesting news home, that Draco Malfoy offered Harry Potter his hand when he realised who he was on the Hogwarts Express. Harry's refusal of Draco's friendly overtures, and the fact that he had already formed allegiance to Ron Weasley, whose family is anathema to the Malfoys, turns Malfoy against him at once. Draco realised, correctly, that the wild hopes of the ex-Death Eaters – that Harry Potter was another, and better, Voldemort – are completely unfounded, and their mutual enmity is assured from that point.

Much of Draco's behaviour at school was modelled on the most impressive person he knew - his father - and he faithfully copied Lucius's cold and contemptuous manner to everyone outside his inner circle. Having recruited a second henchman (Crabbe being already in position pre-Hogwarts) on the train to school, the less physically imposing Malfoy used Crabbe and Goyle as a combination of

henchman and bodyguard throughout his six years of school life.

Draco's feelings for Harry were always based, in a great part, on envy. Though he never sought fame, Harry was unquestionably the most talked-about and admired person at school, and this naturally jarred with a boy who had been brought up to believe that he occupied an almost royal position within the wizarding community. What was more, Harry was most talented at flying, the one skill at which Malfoy had been confident he would outshine all the other first-years. The fact that the Potions master, Snape, had a soft spot for Malfoy, and despised Harry, was only slight compensation.

Draco resorted to many different dirty tactics in his perpetual quest to get under Harry's skin, or discredit him in the eyes of others including, but not limited to, telling lies about him to the press, manufacturing insulting badges to wear about him, attempting to curse him from behind, and dressing up as one of the Dementors (to which Harry had shown himself particularly vulnerable). However, Malfoy had his own moments of humiliation at Harry's hands, notably on the Quidditch pitch, and never forgot the shame of being turned into a bouncing ferret by a Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher.

While many people thought that Harry Potter, who had witnessed the Dark Lord's rebirth, was a liar or a fantasist, Draco Malfoy was one of the few who knew that Harry was telling the truth. His own father had felt his Dark Mark burn and had flown to rejoin the Dark Lord, witnessing Harry and Voldemort's graveyard duel.

The discussions of these events at Malfoy Manor gave rise to conflicting sensations in Draco Malfoy. On the one hand, he was thrilled by the secret knowledge that Voldemort had returned, and that what his father had always described as the family's glory days were back once more. On the other, the whispered discussions about the way that Harry had, again, evaded the Dark Lord's attempts to kill him, caused Draco further twinges of anger and envy. Much as the Death Eaters disliked Harry as an obstacle and as a symbol, he was discussed seriously as an adversary, whereas Draco was still relegated to the status of schoolboy by Death Eaters who met at his parents' house. Though they were on opposing sides of the gathering battle, Draco felt envious of Harry's status. He cheered himself up by imagining Voldemort's triumph, seeing his family honoured under a new regime, and he himself feted at Hogwarts as the important and impressive son of Voldemort's second-in-command.

School life took an upturn in Draco's fifth year. Although forbidden to discuss at Hogwarts what he had heard at home, Draco took pleasure in petty triumphs: he was a Prefect (and Harry was not) and Dolores Umbridge, the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, seemed to loathe Harry quite as much as he did. He became a member

of Dolores Umbridge's Inquisitorial Squad, and made it his business to try and discover what Harry and a gang of disparate students were up to, as they formed and trained, in secret, as the forbidden organisation, Dumbledore's Army. However, at the very moment of triumph, when Draco had cornered Harry and his comrades, and when it seemed that Harry must be expelled by Umbridge, Harry slipped through his fingers. Worse still, Harry managed to thwart Lucius Malfoy's attempt to kill him, and Draco's father was captured and sent to Azkaban.

Draco's world now fell apart. From having been, as he and his father had believed, on the cusp of authority and prestige such as they had never known before, his father was taken from the family home and imprisoned, far away, in the fearsome wizard prison guarded by Dementors. Lucius had been Draco's role model and hero since birth. Now he and his mother were pariahs among the Death Eaters; Lucius was a failure and discredited in the eyes of the furious Lord Voldemort.

Draco's existence had been cloistered and protected until this point; he had been a privileged boy with little to trouble him, assured of his status in the world and with his head full of petty concerns. Now, with his father gone and his mother distraught and afraid, he had to assume a man's responsibilities.

Worse was to come. Voldemort, seeking to punish Lucius Malfoy still further for the botched capture of Harry, demanded that Draco perform a task so difficult that he would almost certainly fail - and pay with his life. Draco was to murder Albus Dumbledore - how, Voldemort did not trouble to say. Draco was to be left to his own initiative and Narcissa guessed, correctly, that her son was being set up to fail by a wizard who was devoid of pity and could not tolerate failure.

Furious at the world that seemed suddenly to have turned on his father, Draco accepted full membership of the Death Eaters and agreed to perform the murder Voldemort ordered. At this early stage, full of the desire for revenge and to return his father to Voldemort's favour, Draco barely comprehended what he was being asked to do. All he knew was that Dumbledore represented everything his imprisoned father disliked; Draco managed, quite easily, to convince himself that he, too, thought the world would be a better place without the Hogwarts Headmaster, around whom opposition to Voldemort had always rallied.

In thrall to the idea of himself as a real Death Eater, Draco set off for Hogwarts with a burning sense of purpose. Gradually, however, as he found that his task was much more difficult than he had anticipated, and after he had come close to accidentally killing two

other people instead of Dumbledore, Draco's nerve began to fail. With the threat of harm to his family and himself hanging over him, he began to crumble under the pressure. The ideas that Draco had about himself, and his place in the world, were disintegrating. All his life, he had idolised a father who advocated violence and was not afraid to use it himself, and now that his son discovered in himself a distaste for murder, he felt it to be a shameful failing. Even so, he could not free himself from his conditioning: he repeatedly refused the assistance of Severus Snape, because he was afraid that Snape would attempt to steal his 'glory'.

Voldemort and Snape underestimated Draco. He proved an adept at Occlumency (the magical art of repelling attempts to read the mind), which was essential for the undercover work he had undertaken. After two doomed attempts on Dumbledore's life, Draco succeeded in his ingenious plan to introduce a whole group of Death Eaters into Hogwarts, with the result that Dumbledore was, indeed, killed - though not by Draco's hand.

Even when faced with a weak and wandless Dumbledore, Draco found himself unable to deliver the coup de grâce because, in spite of himself, he was touched by Dumbledore's kindness and pity for his would-be killer. Snape subsequently covered for Draco, lying to Voldemort about Draco lowering his wand prior to his own arrival at the top of the Astronomy Tower; Snape emphasised Draco's skill in introducing the Death Eaters into the school, and cornering Dumbledore for him, Snape, to kill.

When Lucius was freed from Azkaban shortly afterwards, the family was allowed to return to Malfoy Manor with their lives. However, they were now completely discredited. From dreams of the highest status under Voldemort's new regime, the Malfoys found themselves the lowest in the ranks of the Death Eaters; weaklings and failures, to whom Voldemort was henceforth derisive and contemptuous.

Draco's changed, yet still conflicted, personality revealed itself in his actions during the remainder of the war between Voldemort and those who were trying to stop him. Although Draco had still not rid himself of the hope of returning the family to their former high position, his inconveniently awakened conscience led him to try - half-heartedly, perhaps, but arguably as best he could in the circumstances - to save Harry from Voldemort when the former was captured and dragged to Malfoy Manor. During the final battle at Hogwarts however, Malfoy made yet another attempt to capture Harry and thereby save his parents' prestige, and possibly their lives. Whether he could have brought himself to actually hand over Harry is a moot point; I suspect that, as with his attempted murder of Dumbledore, he

would again have found the reality of bringing about another person's death much more difficult in practice than in theory.

Draco survived Voldemort's siege of Hogwarts because Harry and Ron saved his life. Following the battle, his father evaded prison by providing evidence against fellow Death Eaters, helping to ensure the capture of many of Lord Voldemort's followers who had fled into hiding.

The events of Draco's late teens forever changed his life. He had had the beliefs with which he had grown up challenged in the most frightening way: he had experienced terror and despair, seen his parents suffer for their allegiance, and had witnessed the crumbling of all that his family had believed in. People whom Draco had been raised, or else had learned, to hate, such as Dumbledore, had offered him help and kindness, and Harry Potter had given him his life. After the events of the second wizarding war, Lucius found his son as affectionate as ever, but refusing to follow the same old pure-blood line.

Draco married the younger sister of a fellow Slytherin. Astoria Greengrass, who had gone through a similar (though less violent and frightening) conversion from pure-blood ideals to a more tolerant life view, was felt by Narcissa and Lucius to be something of a disappointment as a daughter-in-law. They had had high hopes of a girl whose family featured on the 'Sacred Twenty-Eight', but as Astoria refused to raise their grandson Scorpius in the belief that Muggles were scum, family gatherings were often fraught with tension.

When the series begins, Draco is, in almost every way, the archetypal bully. With the unquestioning belief in his own superior status he has imbibed from his pure-blood parents, he initially offers Harry friendship on the assumption that the offer needs only to be made to be accepted. The wealth of his family stands in contrast to the poverty of the Weasleys; this too, is a source of pride to Draco, even though the Weasleys' blood credentials are identical to his own.

Everybody recognises Draco because everybody has known somebody like him. Such people's belief in their own superiority can be infuriating, laughable or intimidating, depending on the circumstances in which one meets them. Draco succeeds in provoking all of these feelings in Harry, Ron and Hermione at one time or another.

My British editor questioned the fact that Draco was so accomplished at Occlumency, which Harry (for all his ability in producing a Patronus so young) never mastered. I argued that it was perfectly consistent with Draco's character that he would find it easy to shut down emotion, to compartmentalise, and to deny essential parts of himself. Dumbledore tells Harry, at the end of Order of the

Phoenix, that it is an essential part of his humanity that he can feel such pain; with Draco, I was attempting to show that the denial of pain and the suppression of inner conflict can only lead to a damaged person (who is much more likely to inflict damage on other people).

Draco never realises that he becomes, for the best part of a year, the true owner of the Elder Wand. It is as well that he does not, partly because the Dark Lord is skilled in Legilimency, and would have killed Draco in a heartbeat if he had had an inkling of the truth, but also because, his latent conscience notwithstanding, Draco remains prey to all the temptations that he has been taught to admire - violence and power among them.

I pity Draco, just as I feel sorry for Dudley. Being raised by either the Malfoys or the Dursleys would be a very damaging experience, and Draco undergoes dreadful trials as a direct result of his family's misguided principles. However, the Malfoys do have a saving grace: they love each other. Draco is motivated quite as much by fear of something happening to his parents as to himself, while Narcissa risks everything when she lies to Voldemort at the end of Deathly Hallows and tells him that Harry is dead, merely so that she can get to her son.

For all this, Draco remains a person of dubious morality in the seven published books, and I have often had cause to remark on how unnerved I have been by the number of girls who fell for this particular fictional character (although I do not discount the appeal of Tom Felton, who plays Draco brilliantly in the films and, ironically, is about the nicest person you could meet). Draco has all the dark glamour of the anti-hero; girls are very apt to romanticise such people. All of this left me in the unenviable position of pouring cold common sense on ardent readers' daydreams as I told them, rather severely, that Draco was not concealing a heart of gold under all that sneering and prejudice and that no, he and Harry were not destined to end up best friends.

I imagine that Draco grew up to lead a modified version of his father's existence; independently wealthy, without any need to work, Draco inhabits Malfoy Manor with his wife and son. I see in his hobbies further confirmation of his dual nature. The collection of Dark artefacts harks back to family history, even though he keeps them in glass cases and does not use them. However, his strange interest in alchemical manuscripts, from which he never attempts to make a Philosopher's Stone, hints at a wish for something other than wealth, perhaps even the wish to be a better man. I have high hopes that he will raise Scorpius to be a much kinder and more tolerant Malfoy than he was in his own youth.

Draco had many surnames before I settled on 'Malfoy'. At various times in the earliest drafts he is Smart, Spinks or Spungen. His

Christian name comes from a constellation - the dragon - and yet his wand core is of unicorn.

This was symbolic. There is, after all - and at the risk of re-kindling unhealthy fantasies - some unextinguished good at the heart of Draco.

Polyjuice Potion

The Polyjuice Potion, which is a complex and time-consuming concoction, is best left to highly skilled witches and wizards. It enables the consumer to assume the physical appearance of another person, as long as they first procured part of that individual's body to add to the brew (this may be anything - toenail clippings, dandruff or worse - but it is most usual to use hair) The idea that a witch or wizard might make use of parts of the body is an ancient one, and exists in the folklore and superstitions of many cultures.

The of the potion is only temporary, and depending on how well it has been brewed , may last anything from between ten minutes and twelve hours. You can change age, sex and race by taking the Polyjuice Potion, but not species.

I remember creating the fill list of ingredients for the Polyjuice Potion. Each one was carefuIIy selected. Lacewing flies (the first part of the name suggested an intertwining or binding together of identities); leeches (to suck the essence out of one and into the other); horn of a Bicorn (the idea of duality); knotgrass (another hint of being tied to another person); fluxweed (the mutability of the body as it changed into another) and Boomslang skin (a shedded outer body and a new inner).

The fact that Hermione is able to make a competent Polyjuice Potion at the age of twelve is testimony to her outstanding magical ability, because it is a potion that many adult witches and wizards fear to attempt.

Ghosts

In the world of Harry Potter, a ghost is the transparent, three-dimensional imprint of a deceased witch or wizard, which continues to exist in the mortal world. Muggles cannot come back as ghosts, and the wisest witches and wizards choose not to. It is those with 'unfinished business', whether in the form of fear, guilt, regrets or overt attachment to the material world who refuse to move on to the next dimension.

Having chosen a feeble simulacrum of mortal life, ghosts are limited in what they can experience. No physical pleasure remains to them, and their knowledge and outlook remains at the level it had attained during life, so that old resentments (for instance, at having an incompletely severed neck) continue to rankle after several centuries. For this reason, ghosts tend to be poor company, on the whole. They are especially disappointing on the one subject that fascinates most people: ghosts cannot return a very sensible answer on what it is like to die, because they have chosen an impoverished version of life instead.

Ghosts can pass through solid objects without causing damage to themselves or the material, but create disturbances in water, fire and air. The temperature drops in the immediate vicinity of a ghost, an effect intensified if many congregate in the same place. Their appearance can also turn flames blue. Should part or all of a ghost pass through a living creature, the latter will experience a freezing sensation as though they have been plunged into ice-cold water.

Witches and wizards are much more susceptible to what Muggles call paranormal activity, and will see (and hear) ghosts plainly where a Muggle might only feel that a haunted place is cold or 'creepy'. Muggles who insist that they see ghosts in perfect focus are either a) lying or b) wizards showing off - and in flagrant breach of the International Statute of Secrecy.

Chamber of Secrets

The subterranean Chamber of Secrets was created by Salazar Slytherin without the knowledge of his three fellow founders of Hogwarts. The Chamber was, for many centuries, believed to be a myth; however, the fact that rumours of its existence persisted for so long reveals that Slytherin spoke of its creation and that others believed him, or else had been permitted, by him, to enter.

There is no doubt that each of the four founders sought to stamp their own mark upon the school of witchcraft and wizardry that they intended would be the finest in the world. It was agreed that each would construct their own houses, for example, choosing the location of common rooms and dormitories. However, only Slytherin went further, and built what was in effect a personal, secret headquarters within the school, accessible only by himself or by those he allowed to enter.

Perhaps, when he first constructed the Chamber, Slytherin wanted no more than a place in which to instruct his students in spells of

which the other three founders may have disapproved (disagreements sprung up early around the teaching of the Dark Arts). However, it is clear by the very decoration of the Chamber that by the time Slytherin finished it he had developed grandiose ideas of his own importance to the school. No other founder left behind them a gigantic statue of themselves or draped the school in emblems of their own personal powers (the snakes carved around the Chamber of Secrets being a reference to Slytherin's powers as a Parselmouth).

What is certain is that by the time Slytherin was forced out of the school by the other three founders, he had decided that henceforth, the Chamber he had built would be the lair of a monster that he alone – or his descendants – would be able to control: a Basilisk. Moreover, only a Parselmouth would be able to enter the Chamber. This, he knew, would keep out all three founders and every other member of staff.

The existence of the Chamber was known to Slytherin's descendants and those with whom they chose to share the information. Thus the rumour stayed alive through the centuries.

There is clear evidence that the Chamber was opened more than once between the death of Slytherin and the entrance of Tom Riddle in the twentieth century. When first created, the Chamber was accessed through a concealed trapdoor and a series of magical tunnels. However, when Hogwarts' plumbing became more elaborate in the eighteenth century (this was a rare instance of wizards copying Muggles, because hitherto they simply relieved themselves wherever they stood, and vanished the evidence), the entrance to the Chamber was threatened, being located on the site of a proposed bathroom. The presence in school at the time of a student called Corvinus Gaunt – direct descendant of Slytherin, and antecedent of Tom Riddle – explains how the simple trapdoor was secretly protected, so that those who knew how could still access the entrance to the Chamber even after newfangled plumbing had been placed on top of it.

Whispers that a monster lived in the depths of the castle were also prevalent for centuries. Again, this is because those who could hear and speak to it were not always as discreet as they might have been: the Gaunt family could not resist boasting of their knowledge. As nobody else could hear the creature sliding beneath floorboards or, latterly, through the plumbing, they did not have many believers, and none, until Riddle, dared unleash the monster on the castle.

Successive headmasters and mistresses, not to mention a number of historians, searched the castle thoroughly many times over the centuries, each time concluding that the chamber was a myth. The reason for their failure was simple: none of them was a Parselmouth.

The Sword of Gryffindor

The sword of Gryffindor was made a thousand years ago by goblins, the magical world's most skilled metalworkers, and is therefore enchanted. Fashioned from pure silver, it is inset with rubies, the stone that represents Gryffindor in the hour-glasses that count the house points at Hogwarts. Godric Gryffindor's name is engraved just beneath the hilt. The sword was made to Godric Gryffindor's specifications by Ragnuk the First, finest of the goblin silversmiths, and therefore King (in goblin culture, the ruler does not work less than the others, but more skillfully). When it was finished, Ragnuk coveted it so much that he pretended that Gryffindor had stolen it from him, and sent minions to steal it back. Gryffindor defended himself with his wand, but did not kill his attackers. Instead he sent them back to their king bewitched, to deliver the threat that if he ever tried to steal from Gryffindor again, Gryffindor would unsheathe the sword against them all.

The goblin king took the threat seriously and left Gryffindor in possession of his rightful property, but remained resentful until he died. This was the foundation for the false legend of Gryffindor's theft that persists, in some sections of the goblin community, to this day.

The question of why a wizard would need a sword, though often asked, is easily answered. In the days before the International Statute of Secrecy, when wizards mingled freely with Muggles, they would use swords to defend themselves just as often as wands. Indeed, it was considered unsporting to use a wand against a Muggle sword (which is not to say it was never done). Many gifted wizards were also accomplished duellists in the conventional sense, Gryffindor among them.

There have been many enchanted swords in folklore. The Sword of Nuadu, part of the four legendary treasures of Tuatha Dé Danann, was invincible when drawn. Gryffindor's sword owes something to the legend of Excalibur, the sword of King Arthur, which in some legends must be drawn from a stone by the rightful king. The idea of fitness to carry the sword is echoed in the sword of Gryffindor's return to worthy members of its true owner's house.

Much like a magic wand, the sword of Gryffindor appears to be almost sentient, responding to appeals for help by Gryffindor's chosen successors; and, similar to a wand, part of its magic is that it imbibes that which strengthens it, which can then be used against enemies.

There is a further allusion to Excalibur emerging from the lake when Harry must dive into a frozen forest pool to retrieve the sword in Deathly Hallows (though the location of the sword was really due

to a spiteful impulse of Snape's to place it there), for in other versions of the legend, Excalibur was given to Arthur by the Lady of the Lake, and was returned to the lake when he died.

Within the magical world, physical possession is not necessarily a guarantee of ownership. This concept applies to the three Deathly Hallows, and also to Gryffindor's sword.

I am interested in what happens when cultural beliefs collide. In the Harry Potter books, the most militant of the goblin race consider all goblin-made objects to be theirs by right, although a specific object might be made over to a wizard for his life-span upon a payment of gold. Witches and wizards, like Muggles, believe that once payment has been made, the object belongs to them and their descendants or legatees in perpetuity. This is a clash of values without a solution, because each side has a different concept of what is right. It therefore presents Harry with a difficult moral dilemma when Griphook demands the sword as payment for his services in Deathly Hallows.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

Marge Dursley

Marjorie Eileen Dursley is the older sister of Vernon Dursley. Although no blood relation of Harry Potter, he has been taught to call her 'Aunt Marge'.

Marge is a large and unpleasant woman whose main interest in life is breeding bulldogs. She believes in corporal punishment and plain speaking, which is what she calls being offensive. Marge is secretly in love with a neighbour called Colonel Fubster, who looks after her dogs when she is away. He will never marry her, due to her truly horrible personality. This unrequited passion fuels a lot of her nasty behaviour to other people.

Marge dotes on Dudley, her only nephew. She does not know that Harry Potter, who lives with her relatives, is a wizard. She believes him to be the offspring of two unemployed layabouts who dumped their son on their hardworking relatives, Vernon and Petunia. The latter, who are terrified of the prejudiced and outspoken Marge finding out the truth, have fostered this impression over many years.

When Harry becomes angry with Aunt Marge, who has been insulting his parents, and loses control over his magical abilities, she is blown up like a barrage balloon. Two members of the Accidental Magic Reversal Squad must be dispatched from the Ministry of Magic to deal with this incident and modify Aunt Marge's memory. From that time forward, the Dursleys do not invite Marge to stay while Harry is in residence and he never sees her again.

I regret making Aunt Marge a breeder of bulldogs, as I now know them to be a non-aggressive breed. My sister owns one and he's the most loveable, affectionate dog you could hope to meet. On the other hand, they do look grumpy, and on appearance alone seemed to suit Aunt Marge.

The Knight Bus

For witches and wizards who are Floo-sick, whose Apparition is unreliable, who hate heights or who feel frightened or queasy taking Portkeys, there is always the Knight Bus, which appears whenever a witch or wizard in urgent need of transportation sticks out their wand arm at the curb.

A purple, triple-decker bus, it has seats during the day and beds at night. It is not particularly comfortable, and I would advise against

ordering hot drinks even if offered, because the bus's habit of leaping from one destination to another at a moment's notice can result in a lot of spillage.

The Knight Bus is a relatively modern invention in wizarding society, which sometimes (though it will rarely admit it) takes ideas from the Muggle world. The need for some form of transportation that could be used safely and discreetly by the underage or the infirm had been felt for a while and many suggestions had been made (sidecars on taxi-style broomsticks, carrying baskets slung under Thestrals) all of them vetoed by the Ministry. Finally, Minister for Magic Dugald McPhail hit upon the idea of imitating the Muggles' relatively new 'bus service' and in 1865, the Knight Bus hit the streets.

While some wizards (mainly pureblood fanatics) announced their intention of boycotting what was dubbed 'this Muggle-esque outrage' in the letters page of the Daily Prophet, the Knight Bus proved hugely popular with most of the community and remains busy to this day."

The Knight Bus was so-named because, firstly, knight is a homonym of night, and there are night buses running all over Britain after normal transport stops. Secondly, 'knight' has the connotation of coming to the rescue, of protection, and this seemed appropriate for a vehicle that is often the conveyance of last resort.

The driver and conductor of the Knight Bus in 'Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban' are named after my two grandfathers, Ernest and Stanley.

Sir Cadogan

Birthday	(according to legend)
Wand	Blackthorn and troll whisker, nine inches, combustible
Hogwarts House	
Special abilities	
Parentage	
Family	wives are believed to have left him, rumoured to have had seventeen known children

Before the wizarding community was forced into hiding, it was not unusual for a wizard to live in the Muggle community and hold down what we would now think of as a Muggle job.

It is widely believed in wizarding circles that Sir Cadogan was one of the famous Knights of the Round Table, albeit a little-known one, and that he achieved this position through his friendship with Merlin.

He has certainly been excised from all Muggle volumes of King Arthur's story, but wizarding versions of the tales include Sir Cadogan alongside Sir Lancelot, Sir Bedivere and Sir Percivale. These tales reveal him to be hot-headed and peppery, and brave to the point of foolhardiness, but a good man in a corner.

Sir Cadogan's most famous encounter was with the Wyvern of Wye, a dragonish creature that was terrorizing the West Country. At their first encounter, the beast ate Sir Cadogan's handsome steed, bit his wand in half and melted his sword and visor. Unable to see through the steam rising from his melting helmet, Sir Cadogan barely escaped with his life. However, rather than running away, he staggered into a nearby meadow, grabbed a small, fat pony grazing there, leapt upon it and galloped back towards the wyvern with nothing but his broken wand in his hand, prepared to meet a valiant death. The creature lowered its fearsome head to swallow Sir Cadogan and the pony whole, but the splintered and misfiring wand pierced its tongue, igniting the gassy fumes rising from its stomach and causing the wyvern to explode.

Elderly witches and wizards still use the saying 'I'll take Cadogan's pony' to mean, 'I'll salvage the best I can from a tricky situation'.

Sir Cadogan's portrait, which hangs on the seventh floor of Hogwarts Castle, shows him with the pony he rode forever more (which, understandably perhaps, never much liked him) and accurately depicts his hot temper, his love of a foolhardy challenge and his determination to beat the enemy, come what may.

Professor Kettleburn

Birthday 22nd November
Wand [illegible]hut and phoenix feather, eleven and a half inches, whippy
Hogwarts House [illegible]ffle
Special abilities [illegible]owledge of magical creatures, fearlessness
Parentage [illegible]father, magical mother
Family [illegible], no children
Hobbies [illegible]us creatures are both his work and his hobby

Silvanus Kettleburn was the Care of Magical Creatures teacher at Hogwarts until Harry's third year, when he was replaced by Rubeus Hagrid.

Kettleburn was an enthusiastic and occasionally reckless man whose great love of the often dangerous creatures he studied and looked after led to serious injuries to himself and, occasionally, others.

This fact led to no fewer than sixty-two periods of probation during his time of employment at the school (a record that still stands). Like Hagrid after him, he was prone to underestimating the risks involved in caring for creatures such as Occamys, Grindylows and Fire Crabs, and once famously caused the Great Hall to catch fire after enchanting an Ashwinder to play the Worm in a play of 'The Fountain of Fair Fortune'.

Kettleburn was a loveable if eccentric man and his continuing employment at the school was evidence of the great affection in which staff and students held him. He finished his career with only one arm and half a leg. Albus Dumbledore presented him with a full set of enchanted wooden limbs on his retirement, a gift that had to be replaced regularly since, because Kettleburn's habit of visiting dragon sanctuaries in his spare time meant that his prosthetics were frequently set on fire.

Boggart

A Boggart is a shape-shifting creature that will assume the form of whatever most frightens the person who encounters it. Nobody knows what a Boggart looks like if nobody is there to see it, although it continues to exist, usually giving evidence of its presence by rattling, shaking or scratching the object in which it is hiding. Boggarts particularly like confined spaces, but may also be found lurking in woods and around shadowy corners.

The more generally fearful a person is, the more susceptible they will be to Boggarts. Muggles, too, feel their presence and may even glimpse them, although they seem less capable of seeing them plainly and are usually easily convinced that the Boggart was a figment of their imagination.

Like a poltergeist, a Boggart is not and never has been truly alive. It is one of the strange non-beings that populate the magical world, for which there is no equivalent in the Muggle realm. Boggarts can be made to disappear, but more Boggarts will inevitably arise to take their place. Like poltergeists and the more sinister Dementors, they seem to be generated and sustained by human emotions.

The spell that defeats a Boggart can be tricky, because it involves making the creature into a figure of fun, so that fear can be dispelled in amusement. If the caster is able to laugh aloud at the Boggart, it will disappear at once. The incantation is 'Riddikulus', and the intention is to force the Boggart to assume a less-threatening and hopefully comical form.

Famous Boggarts include the Old Boggle of Canterbury (believed by local Muggles to be a mad, cannibalistic hermit that lived in a cave; in reality a particularly small Boggart that had learnt how to make the most of echos); the Bludgeoning Boggart of Old London Town (a Boggart that had taken on the form of a murderous thug that prowled the back streets of nineteenth-century London, but which could be reduced to a hamster with one simple incantation); and the Screaming Bogey of Strathtully (a Scottish Boggart that had fed on the fears of local Muggles to the point that it had become an elephantine black shadow with glowing white eyes, but which Lyall Lupin of the Ministry of Magic eventually trapped in a matchbox).

Hogwarts Portraits

Hogwarts portraits are able to talk and move around from picture to picture. They behave like their subjects. However, the degree to which they can interact with the people looking at them depends not on the skill of the painter, but on the power of the witch or wizard painted.

When a magical portrait is taken, the witch or wizard artist will naturally use enchantments to ensure that the painting will be able to move in the usual way. The portrait will be able to use some of the subject's favourite phrases and imitate their general demeanour. Thus, Sir Cadogan's portrait is forever challenging people to a fight, falling off its horse and behaving in a fairly unbalanced way, which is how the subject appeared to the poor wizard who had to paint him, while the portrait of the Fat Lady continues to indulge her love of good food, drink and tip-top security long after her living model passed away.

However, neither of these portraits would be capable of having a particularly in-depth discussion about more complex aspects of their lives: they are literally and metaphorically two-dimensional. They are only representations of the living subjects as seen by the artist.

Some magical portraits are capable of considerably more interaction with the living word. Traditionally, a headmaster or headmistress is painted before their death. Once the portrait is completed, the headmaster or headmistress in question keeps it under lock and key, regularly visiting it in its cupboard (if so desired) to teach it to act and behave exactly like themselves, and imparting all kinds of usefull memories and pieces of knowledge that may then be shared through the centuries with their succesors in office.

The depth of knowledge and insight contained in some of the headmasters' and headmistresses' portraits is unknown to any but the

incumbents of the office and the few students who have realised, over the centuries, that the portraits' apparent sleepiness when visitors arrive in the office is not necessarily genuine.

The Marauder's Map

Perhaps no students (even including Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger and Tom Riddle) have ever explored the castle and grounds of Hogwarts as thoroughly and illicitly as the four creators and contributors to the Marauder's Map: James Potter, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin and Peter Pettigrew.

James, Sirius and Peter were not initially impelled to explore the school grounds by night out of devilment alone (though that played its part), but by their desire to help their dear friend Remus Lupin to bear his lycanthropy. Prior to the invention of the Wolfsbane Potion, Lupin was compelled to undergo an excruciating transformation every full moon. Once his condition was discovered by his three best friends, they sought a way to render his transformations less solitary and painful, which led to them learning to become (unregistered) Animagi, so that they could keep him company without harm to themselves. The ability of Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew and James Potter to become, respectively, a dog, a rat and a stag, enabled them to explore the castle grounds by night undetected. The interior of the castle, meanwhile, was mapped over time with the help of James Potter's Invisibility Cloak.

The Marauder's Map is lasting testimony to the advanced magical ability of the four friends who included Harry Potter's father, godfather and favourite teacher. The map they created during their time at Hogwarts appears to be a blank piece of parchment unless activated by the phrase: I solemnly swear that I am up to no good, a phrase that, in the case of three of the four makers, should be understood as a joke. The 'no good' of which they wrote never denoted Dark magic, but school rule-breaking; similar bravado is evinced by their use of their own nicknames on the map ('Messrs Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot and Prongs').

The magic used in the map's creation is advanced and impressive; it includes the Homonculous Charm, enabling the possessor of the map to track the movements of every person in the castle, and it was also enchanted to forever repel (as insultingly as possible) the curiosity of their nemesis, Severus Snape.

Although the precise circumstances surrounding the makers' loss of their map are not given in the Harry Potter novels, it is easy to

conclude that they eventually over-reached themselves and were cornered by Argus Filch, probably on a tip-off from Snape, whose obsession it had become to expose his arch-rival, James Potter, in wrongdoing. The masterpiece of a map was confiscated in Sirius, James, Remus and Peter's final year and none of them were able to steal it back from a well-prepared and suspicious Filch. In any case, their priorities changed in their final months at school, becoming far more serious and focused on the world beyond Hogwarts, where Lord Voldemort was successfully rising to power. All four of the map's creators would shortly be inducted into the renegade organisation headed by Albus Dumbledore, the Order of the Phoenix, and a map of their old school - no matter how ingenious - would no longer be of use to them except as a piece of nostalgia.

The Marauder's Map was, however, of immense use to the young Weasley twins. The story of Fred and George's acquisition of the map is told in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. It was a mark of their high esteem for Harry Potter, and their belief that he stood in need of assistance with a destiny none of them yet fully understood, that they later gifted the map to him, unwittingly passing it on to the child of one of the creators.

The map was subsequently confiscated from Harry Potter by a Death Eater in disguise at the school, who recognised it as a likely source of his own discovery."

The Marauder's Map subsequently became something of a bane to its true originator (me), because it allowed Harry a little too much freedom of information. I never showed Harry taking the map back from the empty office of (the supposed) Mad-Eye Moody, and I sometimes regretted that I had not capitalised on this mistake to leave it there. However, I like the moment when Harry watches Ginny's dot moving around the school in Deathly Hallows, so on balance I am glad I let Harry reclaim his rightful property.

Gobstones

Gobstones is an ancient wizarding game that resembles marbles, the principal difference being that every time a point is conceded, the winning stone squirts a foul-smelling liquid into the loser's face. Players start the game with fifteen small, round Gobstones each (Gobstones are sold in sets of thirty) and the winner must capture all of his opponent's stones. Though most commonly (as the name implies) made of stone, Gobstones may also be made of precious

metals.

Professional Gobstone players compete in national leagues and international tournaments, but it remains a minority sport within the wizarding world, and does not enjoy a very 'cool' reputation, something its devotees tend to resent. Gobstones is most popular among very young wizards and witches, but they generally 'grow out' of the game, becoming more interested in Quidditch as they grow older. The National Gobstone Association has attempted recruitment campaigns such as 'Give Gobstones A Second Glance', although the choice of accompanying picture (current Gobstones World Champion Kevin Hopwood being squirted with an eyeful of gunk) was perhaps ill-chosen.

Gobstones enjoys limited popularity at Hogwarts, ranking low among recreational activities, way behind Quidditch and even Wizarding Chess.

The mother of Professor Severus Snape, Eileen Prince, was President of the Hogwarts Gobstone Club in her time at school.

Dementors and Chocolate

The mood-enhancing properties of chocolate are well known in both the Muggle and wizard worlds. Chocolate is the perfect antidote for anyone who has been overcome in the presence of Dementors, which suck hope and happiness out of their surroundings.

Chocolate can only be a short-term remedy, however. Finding ways to fight off Dementors – or depression – are essential if one is to become permanently happier. Excessive chocolate consumption cannot benefit either Muggle or wizard.

Firebolt

In the late twentieth century, the Nimbus Racing Broom Company dominated its competition. The Nimbus Two Thousand and Two Thousand and One models outsold all other top-class brooms combined by a factor of three to one.

Little did the Nimbus designers realise that a racing broom was in development that would knock them from their number one spot within twelve months of its release. This was the Firebolt, a top-secret project developed by Randolph Spudmore (son of Able Spudmore of Ellerby and Spudmore, who produced the Tinderblast in 1940 and the Swiftstick in 1952, both serviceable brooms, but never achieving great

popularity).

A skillful and innovative broom designer, Randolph was the first to use goblin-made ironwork (including footrests, stand and twig bands), the secrets of which are not fully understood, but which seem to give the Firebolt additional stability and power in adverse weather conditions and a special non-slip foot grip that is of particular advantage to Quidditch players. The handle is of polished ebony and the twigs of birch or hazel according to personal preference (birch is reputed to give more 'oomph' in high ascents, whereas hazel is preferred by those who prefer hair-trigger steering).

The Firebolt is a costly broom and Harry Potter was among the first to own one. It continues to be made in relatively small quantities, partly because the goblin workers involved in the patented ironwork are prone to strikes and walkouts at the smallest provocation.

Secret Keeper

The Fidelius Charm is extremely ancient and still used to this day. It involves the concealment of information inside a living person. The chosen person, or Secret Keeper, is the only person who is thenceforth capable of revealing the protected information to others, however many previously knew it. If the Secret Keeper shares the hidden information, the person to whom he or she has confided it will be bound by the Fidelius Charm and find it impossible to pass the information on.

The Fidelius Charm is not without its weaknesses. If the Secret Keeper wishes to do so, they may divulge the information at any time (although the secret cannot be forced, bewitched or tortured out of a Secret Keeper who does not wish to give up their secret; it must be given voluntarily). If the Secret Keeper dies, anyone to whom he or she has confided the information will become a Secret Keeper. This could involve many people, any of whom might be more willing to share the secret.

Generally speaking, being a Secret Keeper is a dangerous position to occupy. It is such a serious and binding enchantment that few would undertake it lightly. In spite of the fact that the secret can only be given up voluntarily, many have been subjected to the Imperius and Cruciatus Curses in an effort to make them share their information.

Werewolves

There are werewolves worldwide and they have traditionally been pariahs in the wizarding communities from which they often spring; witches and wizards who are frequently involved in hunting or studying such creatures are exposed to a higher risk of attack than the average Muggle. In the late nineteenth century the great English authority on werewolves, Professor Marlowe Forfang, undertook the first comprehensive study of their habits. He found that nearly all those he managed to study and question had been wizards before being bitten. He also learned from the werewolves that Muggles 'taste'™ different to wizards and that they are much more likely to die of their wounds, whereas witches and wizards survive to become werewolves.

The Ministry of Magic's policies on werewolves have always been muddled and inefficient. A Werewolf Code of Conduct was developed in 1637, which werewolves were supposed to sign, promising not to attack anyone but to lock themselves up securely every month. Unsurprisingly, nobody signed the Code, as nobody was prepared to walk into the Ministry and admit to being a werewolf, a problem from which the later Werewolf Registry also suffered. For years, this Werewolf Registry, on which every werewolf was supposed to enter their name and personal details, has remained incomplete and unreliable, because so many of the newly-bitten sought to conceal their condition and escape the inevitable shame and exile. Werewolves have been shunted between the Beast and Being divisions of the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures for years, because nobody could make up their minds whether a werewolf should be classified as human or bestial. At one point, the Werewolf Registry and Werewolf Capture Unit were both in the Beast Division, while at the same time an office for Werewolf Support Services was established in the Being Division. Nobody ever presented themselves for Support Services, for the same reasons that very few ever signed the Registry, and it was eventually closed down.

To become a werewolf, it is necessary to be bitten by a werewolf in their wolfish form at the time of the full moon. When the werewolf'™s saliva mingles with the victim's blood, contamination will occur.

The many Muggle myths and legends surrounding werewolves are, in the main, false, although some contain nuggets of truth. Silver bullets do not kill werewolves, but a mixture of powdered silver and dittany applied to a fresh bite will 'seal'™ the wound and prevent the victim bleeding to death (although tragic tales are told of victims who beg to be allowed to die rather than to live on as werewolves).

In the second half of the twentieth century, several potions were devised to soften the effects of lycanthropy. The most successful was the Wolfsbane Potion.

The monthly transformation of a werewolf is extremely painful if untreated and is usually preceded and succeeded by a few days of pallor and ill health. While in his or her wolfish form, the werewolf loses entirely its human sense of right or wrong. However, it is incorrect to state (as some authorities have, notably Professor Emerett Picardy in his book Lupine Lawlessness: Why Lycanthropes Don'™t Deserve to Live) that they suffer from a permanent loss of moral sense. While human, the werewolf may be as good or kind as the next person. Alternatively, they may be dangerous even while human, as in the case of Fenrir Greyback, who attempts to bite and maim as a man and keeps his nails sharpened into claw-like points for the purpose.

If attacked by a werewolf that is still in human form, the victim may develop certain mild, wolfish characteristics such as a fondness for rare meat, but otherwise should not be troubled by long-term ill effects. However, any bite or scratch given by a werewolf will leave lasting scars, whether or not he or she was in a wolf'™s form at the time of the attack.

While in its animal form, the werewolf is almost indistinguishable in appearance from the true wolf, although the snout may be slightly shorter and the pupils smaller (in both cases more 'human'™) and the tail tufted rather than full and bushy. The real difference is in behaviour. Genuine wolves are not very aggressive, and the vast number of folk tales representing them as mindless predators are now believed by wizarding authorities to refer to werewolves, not true wolves. A wolf is unlikely to attack a human except under exceptional circumstances. The werewolf, however, targets humans almost exclusively and poses very little danger to any other creature.

Werewolves generally reproduce by attacking non-werewolves. The stigma surrounding werewolves has been so extreme for centuries that very few have married and had children. However, where werewolves have married human partners, there has been no sign of their lycanthropy being passed to their offspring.

One curious feature of the condition is that if two werewolves meet and mate at the full moon (a highly unlikely contingency which is known to have occurred only twice) the result of the mating will be wolf cubs which resemble true wolves in everything except their abnormally high intelligence. They are not more aggressive than normal wolves and do not single out humans for attack. Such a litter was once set free, under conditions of extreme secrecy, in the Forbidden Forest at Hogwarts, with the kind permission of Albus Dumbledore. The cubs grew into beautiful and unusually intelligent

wolves and some of them live there still, which has given rise to the stories about 'werewolves'™ in the Forest - stories none of the teachers, or the gamekeeper, has done much to dispel because keeping students out of the Forest is, in their view, highly desirable

Time-Turner

In spite of the many Muggle fantasies around the subject, time travel is possible in only a limited sense even in the magical world. While the subject is shrouded in great secrecy - investigations are ongoing in the Department of Mysteries – it appears that magic can take you only so far.

According to Professor Saul Croaker, who has spent his entire career in the Department of Mysteries studying time-magic:

"As our investigations currently stand, the longest period that may be relived without the possibility of serious harm to the traveller or to time itself is around five hours. We have been able to encase single Hour-Reversal Charms, which are unstable and benefit from containment, in small, enchanted hour-glasses that may be worn around a witch or wizard's neck and revolved according to the number of hours the user wishes to relive.

All attempts to travel back further than a few hours have resulted in catastrophic harm to the witch or wizard involved. It was not realised for many years why time travellers over great distances never survived their journeys. All such experiments have been abandoned since 1899, when Eloise Mintumble became trapped, for a period of five days, in the year 1402. Now we understand that her body had aged five centuries in its return to the present and, irreparably damaged, she died in St Mungo's Hospital for Magical Maladies and Injuries shortly after we managed to retrieve her. What is more, her five days in the distant past caused great disturbance to the life paths of all those she met, changing the course of their lives so dramatically that no fewer than twenty-five of their descendants vanished in the present, having been "un-born".

Finally, there were alarming signs, during the days following Madam Mintumble's recovery, that time itself had been disturbed by such a serious breach of its laws. Tuesday following her reappearance lasted two and a half full days, whereas Thursday shot by in the space of four hours. The Ministry of Magic had a great deal of trouble in covering this up and since that time, the most stringent laws and penalties have been placed around those studying time travel."

Even the use of the very limited amount of Time-Turners at the Ministry's disposal is hedged around with hundreds of laws. While not

as potentially dangerous as skipping five centuries, the re-use of a single hour can still have dramatic consequences and the Ministry of Magic seeks the strictest guarantees if it permits the use of these rare and powerful objects. It would surprise most of the magical community to know that Time-Turners are generally only used to solve the most trivial problems of time-management and never for greater or more important purposes, because, as Saul Croaker tells us, just as the human mind cannot comprehend time, so it cannot comprehend the damage that will ensue if we presume to tamper with its laws.

The Ministry's entire stock of Time-Turners was destroyed during a fight in the Department of Mysteries about three years after Hermione Granger was granted permission to use one at Hogwarts.

I went far too light-heartedly into the subject of time travel in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. While I do not regret it (Prisoner of Azkaban is one of my favourite books in the series), it opened up a vast number of problems for me, because after all, if wizards could go back and undo problems, where were my future plots?

I solved the problem to my own satisfaction in stages. Firstly, I had Dumbledore and Hermione emphasise how dangerous it would be to be seen in the past, to remind the reader that there might be unforeseen and dangerous consequences as well as solutions in time travel. Secondly, I had Hermione give back the only Time-Turner ever to enter Hogwarts. Thirdly, I smashed all remaining Time-Turners during the battle in the Department of Mysteries, removing the possibility of reliving even short periods in the future.

This is just one example of the ways in which, when writing fantasy novels, one must be careful what one invents. For every benefit, there is usually a drawback.

Patronus Charm

The Patronus is the most famous (and famously difficult) defensive charm. The aim is to produce a silvery-white guardian or protector, which takes the form of an animal. The exact form of the Patronus will not be apparent until the spell has been successfully cast. One of the most powerful defensive charms known to wizardkind, the Patronus can also be used as a messenger between wizards. As a pure, protective magical concentration of happiness and hope (the recollection of a single talisman memory is essential in its creation) it

is the only spell effective against Dementors. The majority of witches and wizards are unable to produce Patronuses and to do so is generally considered a mark of superior magical ability.

Some witches and wizards may manage an incorporeal Patronus, which resembles a mass or wisp of silvery vapour or smoke. In some cases a witch or wizard may choose to produce an incorporeal Patronus deliberately, if he or she wishes to disguise the form it generally takes (Remus Lupin, for instance, is afraid that his corporeal Patronus gives too much away). The incorporeal Patronus is not a true Patronus and while it will give limited protection, it cannot provide the defensive power of the corporeal Patronus, which has the form and substance of an animal.

The Patronus Charm is one of the most ancient of charms and appears in many accounts of early magic. In spite of a long association with those fighting for lofty or noble causes (those able to produce corporeal Patronuses were often elected to high office within the Wizengamot and Ministry of Magic), the Patronus is not unknown among Dark wizards. While there is a widespread and justified belief that a wizard who is not pure of heart cannot produce a successful Patronus (the most famous example of the spell backfiring is that of the Dark wizard Raczidian, who was devoured by maggots), a rare few witches and wizards of questionable morals have succeeded in producing the Charm (Dolores Umbridge, for example, is able to conjure a cat Patronus to protect herself from Dementors). It may be that a true and confident belief in the rightness of one‘s actions can supply the necessary happiness. However, most such men and women, who become desensitised to the effects of the Dark creatures with whom they may ally themselves, regard the Patronus as an unnecessary spell to have in their arsenal.

No reliable system for predicting the form of an individual‘s Patronus has ever been found, although the great eighteenth-century researcher of Charms, Professor Catullus Spangle, set forth certain principles that are widely accepted as true.

The Patronus, asserted Spangle, represents that which is hidden, unknown but necessary within the personality. „For it is evident,“ he writes, in his masterwork *Charms of Defence and Deterrence*:

“… that a human confronted with inhuman evil, such as the Dementor, must draw upon resources he or she may never have needed, and the Patronus is the awakened secret self that lies dormant until needed, but which must now be brought to light…”

Here, says Spangle, is the explanation for the appearance of Patronuses in forms that their casters might not expect, for which they have never felt a particular affinity, or (in rare cases) even recognise.

Spangle is interesting on the subject of those unusual witches and

wizards who produce a Patronus that takes the form of their favourite animal.

"It is my firm belief that such a Patronus is an indicator of obsession or eccentricity. Here is a wizard who may not be able to hide their essential self in common life, who may, indeed, parade tendencies that others might prefer to conceal. Whatever the form of their Patronus, you would be well-advised to show respect, and occasionally caution, towards a witch or wizard who produces the Patronus of their choice."

The form of a Patronus may change during the course of a witch or wizard's life. Instances have been known of the form of the Patronus transforming due to bereavement, falling in love or profound shifts in a person's character. Thus Nymphadora Tonks's Patronus changes from a jack rabbit to a wolf (not a werewolf) when she falls in love with Remus Lupin. Some witches and wizards may be unable to produce a Patronus at all until they have undergone some kind of psychic shock.

It is usual, but not inevitable, for a Patronus to take the form of an animal commonly found in the caster's native country. Given their long affinity with humans it is perhaps unsurprising that among the most common Patronuses (although it must be remembered that any corporeal Patronus is highly unusual) are dogs, cats and horses. However, every Patronus is as unique as its creator and even identical twins have been known to produce very different Patronuses.

Extinct Patronuses are very rare but not unknown. Strangely, given their long connection with wizardkind, owl Patronuses are unusual. Most uncommon of all possibly Patronuses are magical creatures such as dragons, Thestrals and phoenixes. Never forget, though, that one of the most famous Patronuses of all time was a lowly mouse, which belonged to a legendary young wizard called Illyius, who used it to hold off an attack from an army of Dementors single-handedly. While a rare and magical Patronus undoubtedly reflects an unusual personality, it does not follow that it is more powerful, or will enjoy greater success at defending its caster.

Remus Lupin

Birth	March
Wand	9 and a quarter inches, Cypress, Unicorn Hair
Hogwarts House	Gryffindor
Special abilities	Gifted in Defense Against the Dark Arts; werewolf
Parents	Lyall, Hope, muggle mother
Family	Wife Nymphadora Tonks, son Edward Remus (Teddy) Lupin

Parents

Remus Lupin was the only child of the wizard Lyall Lupin and his Muggle wife Hope Howell.

Lyall Lupin was a very clever, rather shy young man who, by the time he was thirty, had become a world-renowned authority on Non-Human Spiritous Apparitions. These include poltergeists, Boggarts and other strange creatures that, while sometimes ghostlike in appearance and behaviour, have never been truly alive and remain something of a mystery even to the wizarding world.

On an investigative trip into a dense Welsh forest in which a particularly vicious Boggart was supposed to be lurking, Lyall ran across his future wife. Hope Howell, a beautiful Muggle girl who worked in an insurance office in Cardiff, had taken an ill-advised walk through what she believed to be innocent woodland. Boggarts and poltergeists may be sensed by Muggles, and Hope, a particularly imaginative and sensitive person, had become convinced that something was watching her from between the dark trees. Eventually, her imagination became so overactive that the Boggart assumed a form: that of a large, evil-looking man, bearing down on her with a snarl and outstretched hands in the gloom. Hearing her scream, young Lyall came sprinting through the trees, causing the apparition to shrink into a field mushroom with one wave of his wand. The terrified Hope thought, in her confusion, that he had driven her would-be attacker away, and his first words to her - ‘it’s all right, it was only a Boggart’ made no impression on her. Noticing how very beautiful she was, Lyall made the wise decision not to talk about Boggarts any more, but instead agreed that the man had been very big and scary, and that the only sensible thing to do was for him to accompany Hope home to protect her.

The young couple fell in love, and not even Lyall’s shamefaced admission, some months later, that Hope had never really been in danger, dented her enthusiasm for him. To Lyall’s delight, Hope

accepted his proposal of marriage and threw herself enthusiastically into preparations for the wedding, complete with a Boggart-topped cake.

Lyall and Hope's first and only child, Remus John, was born after a year of marriage. A happy, healthy little boy, he showed early signs of magic and both parents imagined that he would follow in his father's footsteps, attending Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in due course.

Bitten

By the time that Remus was four years old, the amount of Dark magical activity across the country was increasing steadily. While few yet knew what lay behind the mounting attacks and sightings, Lord Voldemort's first ascent to power was in progress and Death Eaters were recruiting all kinds of Dark creatures to join them in their quest to overthrow the Ministry of Magic. The Ministry called in the services of authorities on Dark creatures - even those as minor as Boggarts and poltergeists - to help it understand and contain the threat. Lyall Lupin was among those asked to join the Department for the Regulation and Control of Magical Creatures, which he did gladly. It was here that Lyall came face-to-face with a werewolf called Fenrir Greyback, who had been brought in for questioning about the death of two Muggle children.

The Werewolf Registry was badly maintained. Werewolves were so shunned by wizarding society that they generally avoided contact with other people; they lived in self-described 'packs' and did all they could to avoid being registered. Greyback, whom the Ministry did not know to be a werewolf, claimed to be nothing more than a Muggle tramp who was utterly amazed at finding himself in a room full of wizards, and horrified by the talk about the poor, dead children.

Greyback's filthy clothing and lack of wand were sufficient to persuade two overworked and ignorant members of the questioning committee that he was telling the truth, but Lyall Lupin was not so easily fooled. He recognised certain telltale signs in Greyback's appearance and behaviour and told the committee that Greyback ought to be kept in detention until the next full moon, a mere twenty-four hours later.

Greyback sat in silence while Lyall was laughed at by his fellow committee members ('Lyall, you just stick to Welsh Boggarts, that's what you're good at'). Lyall, generally a mild-mannered man, grew angry. He described werewolves as 'soulless, evil, deserving nothing but death'. The committee ordered Lyall out of the room, the head of the committee apologised to the Muggle tramp and Greyback was released.

The wizard who escorted Greyback out of the inquiry was intending to place a Memory Charm upon him, so that he would forget having been inside the Ministry. Before he had a chance to do so, he was overpowered by Greyback and two accomplices who had been lurking at the entrance, and the three werewolves fled.

Greyback lost no time in sharing with his friends how Lyall Lupin had just described them. Their revenge on the wizard who thought that werewolves deserved nothing but death would be swift and terrible.

Shortly before Remus Lupin's fifth birthday, as he slept peacefully in his bed, Fenrir Greyback forced open the boy's window and attacked him. Lyall reached the bedroom in time to save his son's life, driving Greyback out of the house with a number of powerful curses. However, henceforth, Remus would be a full-fledged werewolf.

Lyall Lupin never forgave himself for the words he had spoken in front of Greyback at the inquiry: 'soulless, evil, deserving nothing but death'. He had parroted what was the common view of werewolves in his community, but his son was what he had always been - loveable and clever - except for that terrible period at the full moon when he suffered an excruciating transformation and became a danger to everyone around him. For many years, Lyall kept the truth about the attack, including the identity of the attacker, from his son, fearing Remus's recriminations.

Childhood

Lyall did all he could to find a cure, but neither potions nor spells could help his son. From this time onwards, the family's lives were dominated by the need to hide Remus's condition. They uprooted themselves from village to town, leaving the instant that rumours of the boy's odd behaviour started. Fellow witches and wizards noticed how peaky Remus became as new moon approached, not to mention his monthly disappearances. Remus was not allowed to play with other children, in case he let slip the truth of his condition. In consequence, and in spite of his loving parents, he was a very lonely boy.

While Remus was small, his containment during his transformation was not difficult; a locked room and plenty of silencing spells usually sufficed. However, as he grew, so did his wolfish self, and by the time he was ten years old, he was capable of pounding down doors and smashing windows. Ever more powerful spells were needed to contain him and both Hope and Lyall grew thin with worry and fear. They adored their son, but they knew that their community - already beset with fears at the mounting Dark activity around them - would not be lenient on an uncontrolled werewolf. The hopes that they had once

had for their son seemed in ruins, and Lyall educated Remus at home, certain that he would never be able to set foot in school.

Shortly before Remus's eleventh birthday, no less a person than Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts, arrived uninvited on the Lupins' doorstep. Flustered and frightened, Lyall and Hope tried to block his entrance, but somehow, five minutes later, Dumbledore was sitting at the fireside, eating crumpets and playing Gobstones with Remus.

Dumbledore explained to the Lupins that he knew what had happened to their son. Greyback had boasted of what he had done and Dumbledore had spies among Dark creatures. However, Dumbledore told the Lupins that he saw no reason why Remus should not come to school, and described the arrangements that he had made to give the boy a safe and secure place for his transformations. Due to the widespread prejudice around werewolves, Dumbledore agreed that for Remus's own sake his condition should not be broadcast. Once a month, he would leave for a secure and comfortable house in the village of Hogsmeade, guarded by many spells and reached only by an underground passage from the Hogwarts grounds, where he could transform in peace. Remus's excitement was beyond anything he had known before. It was the dream of his life to meet other children and have, for the first time, friends and playmates.

School

Sorted into Gryffindor house, Remus Lupin was swiftly befriended by two cheerful, confident and rebellious boys, James Potter and Sirius Black. They were attracted by Remus's quiet sense of humour and a kindness that they valued, even if they did not always possess it themselves. Remus, always the underdog's friend, was kind to short and rather slow Peter Pettigrew, a fellow Gryffindor, whom James and Sirius might not have thought worthy of their attention without Remus's persuasion. Soon, these four became inseparable.

Remus functioned as the conscience of this group, but it was an occasionally faulty conscience. He did not approve of their relentless bullying of Severus Snape, but he loved James and Sirius so much, and was so grateful for their acceptance, that he did not always stand up to them as much as he knew he should.

Inevitably, his three best friends soon became curious as to why Remus had to vanish once a month. Convinced by his lonely childhood that his friends would desert him if they knew that he was a werewolf, Remus made up ever more elaborate lies to account for his absences. James and Sirius guessed the truth in their second year. To Remus's astonished gratitude, they not only remained his friends but

thought up an ingenious method of easing his monthly isolation. They also gave him a nickname that would follow him all through school: 'Moony'. Remus finished his school career as a Prefect.

The Order of the Phoenix

By the time the four friends left school, Lord Voldemort's ascendancy was almost complete. True resistance to him was concentrated in the underground organisation called the Order of the Phoenix, which all four young men joined.

The death of James Potter, along with his wife Lily, at the hands of Lord Voldemort, was one of the most traumatic events of Remus's already troubled life. His friends meant even more to him than to other people, because he had long since accepted the fact that most people would treat him as untouchable, and that there could be no possibility of marrying and having children. Even worse, within twenty- four hours he had also lost his two other best friends. Remus was in the north of the country on Order of the Phoenix business when he heard the horrible news that one of them had murdered the other, and was now in Azkaban, a traitor to the Order and to Lily and James themselves.

The downfall of Voldemort, such a source of jubilation to the rest of the wizarding community, marked the beginning of a long stretch of loneliness and unhappiness for Remus. He had lost his three close friends and, with the Order disbanded, his previous comrades returned to busy lives with families. His mother was now dead, and while Lyall, his father, was always delighted to see his son, Remus refused to endanger his father's peaceful existence by returning to live with him.

Remus now lived a hand-to-mouth existence, taking jobs that were far below his level of ability, always knowing that he would have to leave them before his pattern of growing sick once a month at the full moon was noticed by his workmates.

The Wolfsbane Potion

One development in the wizarding community gave Remus hope: the discovery of the Wolfsbane Potion. While this did not prevent a werewolf losing his human form once a month, it restricted his transformation to that of an ordinary and sleepy wolf. It had always been Remus's worst fear that he would kill while out of his right mind. However, the Wolfsbane Potion was complex and the ingredients very expensive. Remus had no chance to sample it without admitting what he was and so he continued his lonely, itinerant existence.

Return to Hogwarts

Once again, Albus Dumbledore changed the course of Remus

Lupin's life when he tracked him down to a tumbledown, semi-derelict cottage in Yorkshire. Delighted to see the Headmaster, Remus was amazed when Dumbledore offered him the post of Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. He was only persuaded to accept when Dumbledore explained that there would be a limitless supply of Wolfsbane Potion, courtesy of the Potions master, Severus Snape.

At Hogwarts, Remus revealed himself to be a gifted teacher, with a rare flair for his own subject and a profound understanding of his pupils. He was, as ever, particularly drawn to the underdog, and both Neville Longbottom and Harry Potter benefited from his wisdom and kindness.

However, Remus's old flaw was at work. He had grave suspicions about one of his old friends, a known fugitive, but did not share them with anyone at Hogwarts. His desperate desire to belong and to be liked meant that he was neither as brave nor as honest as he ought to have been.

An unfortunate combination of circumstances arose that resulted in Remus undergoing a true werewolf's transformation on the grounds of the school. Severus Snape's resentment, never abated by Remus's subsequent respectful politeness, made sure that it was widely known what the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher was. Remus felt obliged to resign and departed Hogwarts once more.

Marriage

As Lord Voldemort once again gained ascendancy, the old resistance regrouped and Remus found himself once more part of the Order of the Phoenix.

This time, the group included an Auror who had been too young to belong to the Order during its first incarnation. Clever, brave and funny, pink-haired Nymphadora Tonks was a protégée of Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody, the toughest and most grizzled Auror of them all.

Remus, so often melancholy and lonely, was first amused, then impressed, then seriously smitten by the young witch. He had never fallen in love before. If it had happened in peacetime, Remus would have simply taken himself off to a new place and a new job, so that he did not have to endure the pain of watching Tonks fall in love with a handsome, young wizard in the Auror office, which was what he expected to happen. However, this was war; they were both needed in the Order of the Phoenix, and nobody knew what the next day would bring. Remus felt justified in remaining exactly where he was, keeping his feelings to himself but secretly rejoicing every time somebody paired him with Tonks on some overnight mission.

It had never occurred to Remus that Tonks could return his feelings because he had become so used to considering himself

unclean and unworthy. One night when they lay in hiding outside a known Death Eater's house, after a year of increasingly warm friendship, Tonks made an idle remark about one of their fellow Order members ('He's still handsome, isn't he, even after Azkaban?'). Before he could stop himself, Remus had replied bitterly that he supposed she had fallen for his old friend ('He always got the women.'). At this, Tonks became suddenly angry. 'You'd know perfectly well who I've fallen for, if you weren't too busy feeling sorry for yourself to notice.'

Remus's immediate response was a happiness he had never experienced in his life, but this was extinguished almost at once by a sense of crushing duty. He had always known that he could not marry and run the risk of passing on his painful, shameful condition. He therefore pretended not to understand Tonks, which did not fool her at all. Wiser than Remus, she was sure that he loved her, but that he was refusing to admit it out of mistaken nobility. However, he avoided any further excursions with her, barely talked to her, and started volunteering for the most dangerous missions. Tonks became desperately unhappy, convinced not only that the man she loved would never willingly spend time with her again, but also that he might walk to his death rather than admit his feelings.

Remus and Tonks both fought Lord Voldemort and his Death Eaters in the Department of Mysteries, a battle that resulted in the public exposure of Voldemort's return. The loss of the last of his school friends during this battle did nothing to soften Remus's increasingly self-destructive attitude. Tonks could only watch in despair as he volunteered to spy for the Order, leaving to live among fellow werewolves to try to persuade them to Dumbledore's side. In doing this, he was exposing himself to the possible reprisals of the werewolf who had changed his life forever, Fenrir Greyback.

Remus came face-to-face with both Greyback and Tonks at Hogwarts barely a year later, when the Order clashed with Death Eaters within the castle. During this battle, Remus lost yet another person he had loved: Albus Dumbledore. Dumbledore had been adored by every member of the Order of the Phoenix, but to Remus, he had represented the sort of kindness, tolerance and understanding that he had received from nobody in the world outside his parents and his three best friends, and had been the only man ever to offer him a position within normal wizarding society.

In the aftermath of the bloody fight, inspired by Fleur Delacour's protestation of enduring love for Bill Weasley, who had been savaged by Greyback, Tonks made a brave, public declaration of her feelings for Remus, who was forced to admit the strength of his love for her. In spite of continuing misgivings that he was acting selfishly, Remus married Tonks quietly in the north of Scotland, with witnesses taken

from the local wizarding tavern. He continued to fear that the stigma attached to him would infect his wife and wished for no fanfare around their union; he swung constantly between elation that he was married to the woman of his dreams and terror of what he might have brought upon them both.

Parenthood

Within a few weeks of their marriage, Remus realised that Tonks was pregnant and every fear he had ever had surfaced. He was convinced that he had passed on his condition to an innocent child and that he had condemned Tonks to the same life as his mother, forever moving around, unable to settle, having to hide her increasingly violent child from sight. Full of remorse and self-recrimination, Remus fled, leaving the pregnant Tonks, seeking out Harry and offering to accompany him on whatever death-defying adventure awaited.

To Remus's shock and displeasure, the seventeen-year-old Harry not only declined his offer but became angry and insulting. He told his ex-teacher that he was acting selfishly and irresponsibly. Remus responded with uncharacteristic violence and stormed out of the house, taking refuge in a corner of the Leaky Cauldron, where he sat drinking and fuming.

However, after a few hours' reflection, Remus was forced to accept that his ex-pupil had just taught him a valuable lesson. James and Lily, Remus reflected, had stuck with Harry even unto their own deaths. His own parents, Lyall and Hope, had sacrificed their peace and security to keep the family together. Bitterly ashamed, Remus left the inn and returned to his wife, where he begged her forgiveness and assured her that, come what may, he would never leave her again. For the rest of Tonks's pregnancy, Remus eschewed missions for the Order of the Phoenix and made it his first priority to protect his wife and unborn child.

The Lupins' son, Edward Remus ('Teddy'), was named for Remus's recently deceased father-in-law. To both parents' relief and delight, he showed no sign of lycanthropy when born, but inherited his mother's ability to change his appearance at will. On the night of Teddy's birth, Remus briefly left Tonks and his son in the charge of his mother-in-law, so that he could go and find Harry for the first time since their angry confrontation. Here, he asked Harry to be Teddy's godfather, feeling nothing but forgiveness and gratitude towards the person who had sent him home to the family that gave him his greatest happiness.

Death

Both Remus and Tonks returned to Hogwarts for the final battle against Voldemort, leaving their tiny son in the care of his

grandmother. The couple knew that if Voldemort won this battle, their family was sure to be eliminated: both were notorious members of the Order of the Phoenix, Tonks was a marked woman in the eyes of her Death Eater aunt, Bellatrix Lestrange, and their son was the very antithesis of a pure-blood, having many Muggle relatives and a dash of werewolf.

Having survived numerous encounters with Death Eaters and fought his way skillfully and bravely out of many tight corners, Remus Lupin met his end at the hands of Antonin Dolohov, one of the longest-serving, most devoted and sadistic of all Voldemort's Death Eaters. Remus was no longer in prime fighting condition when he rushed to join the fight. Months of inactivity, using mostly spells of concealment and protection, had blunted his duelling capabilities, and when he ran up against a dueller of Dolohov's skill, now battle-hardened after months of killing and maiming, his reactions were too slow.

Remus Lupin was posthumously awarded the Order of Merlin, First Class, the first werewolf ever to be accorded this honour. The example of his life and death did much to lift the stigma on werewolves. He was never forgotten by anyone who knew him: a brave, kind man who did the best he could in very difficult circumstances and who helped many more than he ever realised.

Remus Lupin was one of my favourite characters in the entire Potter series. I made myself cry all over again while writing this entry, because I hated killing him.

Lupin's condition of lycanthropy (being a werewolf) was a metaphor for those illnesses that carry a stigma, like HIV and AIDs. All kinds of superstitions seem to surround blood-borne conditions, probably due to taboos surrounding blood itself. The wizarding community is as prone to hysteria and prejudice as the Muggle one, and the character of Lupin gave me a chance to examine those attitudes.

Remus's Patronus is never revealed in the Potter books, even though it is he who teaches Harry the difficult and unusual art of producing one. It is, in fact, a wolf - an ordinary wolf, not a werewolf. Wolves are family-orientated and non-aggressive, but Remus dislikes the form of his Patronus, which is a constant reminder of his affliction. Everything wolfish disgusts him, and he often produces a non-corporeal Patronus deliberately, especially when others are watching.

Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

The Floo network

In use for centuries, the Floo Network, while somewhat uncomfortable, has many advantages. Firstly, unlike broomsticks, the Network can be used without fear of breaking the International Statute of Secrecy. Secondly, unlike Apparition, there is little to no danger of serious injury. Thirdly, it can be used to transport children, the elderly and the infirm.

Nearly every witch or wizard home is connected to the Floo Network. While a fireplace may be disconnected by the use of a simple spell, connection requires the permission of the Ministry of Magic, which regulates the Floo service and prevents Muggle fireplaces becoming inadvertently joined up (although temporary connection can be arranged in emergencies).

In addition to domestic fireplaces, there are around a thousand fireplaces across Britain connected to the Floo Network, including those at the Ministry of Magic, and various wizarding shops and inns. The fireplaces of Hogwarts are not generally connected, although there have been occasions when one or more has been tampered with, often without the staff's knowledge.

Although generally reliable, mistakes can happen. Speaking the name of the destination loudly and clearly upon entering the Floo flames is sometimes difficult, due to ash, heat and panic. The most notorious instance of accidental misdirection happened in 1855 when, after a particularly nasty row with her husband, witch Violet Tillyman leapt into the living room fire and cried, between sobs and hiccups, that she wanted to go to her mother's house.

Several weeks later, with no clean pots in the house and his socks in urgent need of washing, her husband Albert decided that it was time she came home, and took the Floo Network to his mother-in-law's. To his surprise, she claimed that Violet had never arrived. Albert, a suspicious man and a bit of a bully, raged, stormed and searched the house, but his mother-in-law appeared to be telling the truth. A poster campaign and a series of articles in the Daily Prophet later, Violet had still not been found. Nobody seemed to know where she was and nobody had seen her come out of any other fireplace. For several months after her disappearance, people were afraid to take the Floo Network, in case it simply vanished them into thin air. However, time passed, memories of Violet faded, and nobody else disappeared, so the wizarding community continued as usual. Albert Tillyman returned grumpily to his house, learned cleaning and darning spells,

and never used the Floo Network again for fear of what it had done to his wife.

It was not until twenty years later, after Albert's death, that Violet Tillyman resurfaced. Due to the incoherent way she had spoken when she had entered the Floo Network, she had not emerged from her mother's fireplace, but that of Myron Otherhaus, a handsome wizard who lived in Bury St Edmunds. In spite of Violet's tear-stained, ash-covered and blotchy appearance, it had been love at first sight when she toppled out of his fire, and Myron, Violet and their seven children lived happily ever after.

„You do see Harry go to the wrong place in the course of the book, but mistakes are often made with the Floo Network. The most notorious is a woman called Violet Tillyman who in 1855 had a row with her husband Albert and she got into the fire very distressed and she said 'I want to go to Mother's house' but because she was sobbing, things didn't go according to plan. Albert, after two weeks, found the house was getting quite dirty, got in the fire went off to his mother-in-law's and found that Violet wasn't there. And she didn't resurface for twenty years. And it was only twenty years later, after Albert's death, that Violet went public and it turned out that she'd gone accidentally to Myron Otherhaus's place in Bury St Edmunds – a very handsome wizard – and she emerged with seven children."

'Floo' came from the flue that you find on a chimney and don't ask me to tell you exactly what a flue is, because I don't know. I just know it exists, but I'm not sure what it does exactly. I needed a way for particularly young witches and wizards to travel around because I'd created the International Statute of Secrecy, which was inconvenient, so immediately that made it quite difficult for them to move around, particularly over long distances, by magical means. So I thought they need something very discreet, and that's how the Floo Network came about, so it was a way of moving from house to house without ever being seen by Muggles. But it was fun and comical to have it a little bit difficult to use, so that you could easily make a mistake in where you ended up.

Portkeys

Wizards who cannot Apparate (dematerialise and reappear at will), who wish to travel by daylight (meaning that broomsticks, Thestrals, flying cars and dragons are inappropriate), or whose destination has no fireplace (rendering Floo powder useless) will have to resort to the use of a Portkey.

Almost any inanimate object can be turned into a Portkey. Once bewitched, the object will transport anyone who grasps it to a pre-arranged destination. A Portkey may also be enchanted to transport the grasper (or graspers) only at a given time. In this way, the arrivals and departures of great numbers of witches and wizards can be staggered, enabling such events such as the Quidditch World Cup to take place with few security breaches.

When secrecy is paramount, and mass movement is planned, the chosen Portkey will be a nondescript object secreted in an out-of-the-way place, so that it will be taken for a piece of unimportant debris by Muggle passers-by. Accidents have occurred, however; two Muggle dog-walkers found themselves accidentally transported to a Celestina Warbeck concert in 2003, because their dogs had run off with an old trainer on Clapham Common (leaving an anguished crowd of witches and wizards to look frantically for their Portkey on a stretch of empty grass, hopefully seizing old crisp packets and cigarette ends). One of the Muggle dog-walkers was even invited on stage by Celestina to perform a duet of 'A Cauldron Full of Hot, Strong Love'. While the Memory Charm placed upon him by a harried Ministry official seemed to take at the time, he has since written a popular Muggle song that bears an uncanny resemblance to Celestina's worldwide hit (Ms Warbeck is not amused).

The sensation of travelling by Portkey is universally agreed to be uncomfortable, if not downright unpleasant, and can lead to nausea, giddiness and worse. Healers recommend that the elderly, pregnant and infirm avoid using Portkeys. The suggestion of arranging Portkeys for the transportation of annoying relatives has saved many a wizarding family Christmas.

The name 'Portkey' comes from the French 'porter' - to carry - and the word 'key', in the sense of secret or trick. I don't like to boast, but I own a real Portkey - the key to the US city of LaPorte - which was given to me by Emerson Spartz, the founder of the fansite Mugglenet.com

Colours

Witches and wizards often reveal themselves to each other in

public by wearing purple or green, often in combination. In Britain (and much of Europe) purple has an association with both royalty and religion. Purple dyes, being costly, were once worn only by those who could afford them; bishops' rings are traditionally set with amethysts. Green has long had a supernatural connection in the UK. Superstition says that it ought to be worn with care; the fairies are supposedly possessive of it, as it is their proper colour. It ought never to be worn at weddings, due to a further association with misfortune and death. Green is the colour of much 'Dark' magic; of the 'Dark Mark', of the luminescent potion in which Voldemort conceals one of his Horcruxes, of many 'Dark' spells and curses, and of Slytherin house. The combination of purple and green, therefore, is suggestive of both sides of magic: the noble and the ignoble, the helpful and the destructive.

The four Hogwarts houses have a loose association with the four elements, and their colours were chosen accordingly. Gryffindor (red and gold) is connected to fire; Slytherin (green and silver) to water; Hufflepuff (yellow and black, representing wheat and soil) to earth; and Ravenclaw (blue and bronze; sky and eagle feathers) to air.

Colours like peach and salmon pink are distinctly un-magical, and therefore much favoured by the likes of Aunt Petunia. On the other hand, shocking pink, as sported by the likes of Nymphadora Tonks, conveys a certain punky 'yes, I've got a Muggle-born father and I'm not ashamed of it' attitude.

Colours also played their part in the naming of Hagrid and Dumbledore, whose first names are Rubeus (red) and Albus (white) respectively. The choice was a nod to alchemy, which is so important in the first Harry Potter book, where 'the red' and 'the white' are essential mystical components of the process. The symbolism of the colours in this context has mystic meaning, representing different stages of the alchemic process (which many people associate with a spiritual transformation). Where my two characters were concerned, I named them for the alchemical colours to convey their opposing but complementary natures: red meaning passion (or emotion); white for asceticism; Hagrid being the earthy, warm and physical man, lord of the forest; Dumbledore the spiritual theoretician, brilliant, idealised and somewhat detached. Each is a necessary counterpoint to the other as Harry seeks father figures in his new world.

History of the Quidditch World Cup

According to The Official Guide to the Quidditch World Cup

produced by the International Confederation of Wizards' Quidditch Committee (ICWQC) and available through all reputable wizarding bookstores for what many feel is the ridiculously overpriced sum of thirty nine Galleons — the tournament has been held every' four years since 1473. As with so much else about the wizarding world's most important sporting competition, many query the accuracy of this statement.

As only European teams competed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, purists prefer to date the Quidditch World Cup's inception from the seventeenth century when it became open to all continents. There is also heated debate about the accuracy of some historical accounts of tournaments. A substantial amount of all post-game analysis centres on whether magical interference took place and whether it made, or ought to have made, the final result moot.

The ICWQC has the unlucky job of regulating this contentious and anarchic competition. The rulebook concerning both on- and off-pitch magic is alleged to stretch to nineteen volumes and to include such rules as 'no dragon is to be introduced into the stadium for any purpose including, but not limited to, team mascot, coach or cup warmer' and 'modification of any part of the referee's body, whether or not he or she has requested such modification, will lead to a lifetime ban from the tournament and possibly imprisonment.'

A source of vehement disagreements, a security risk for all who attend it and a frequent focus for unrest and protest, the Quidditch World Cup is simultaneously the most exhilarating sporting event on earth and a logistical nightmare for the host nation.

Statute of Secrecy

A watershed moment for the Quidditch World Cup was the implementation of the International Statute of Secrecy in 1692, which was intended to conceal the existence of magic and wizards. The International Confederation of Wizards (ICW) saw the Quidditch World Cup as a security risk of the highest magnitude because of the mass movement and congregation of so many members of the international wizarding community. However, following mass protests and threats to the ICW, it was agreed that the tournament could continue and a regulatory body — the ICWQC — was set up to locate suitable venues — usually remote moors, deserts and deserted islands — arrange transportation for spectators (as many as a hundred thousand routinely attend finals) and police the games themselves, a task generally agreed to be among the most thankless and difficult in the wizarding world.

How the Tournament Works

The number of countries that enter a Quidditch team for each World Cup fluctuates from tournament to tournament. Where the wizarding population of a country is small it can be difficult to raise a team of the required standard, but other factors such as international conflict or disaster may affect the entry numbers. However, any country may enter a team within the twelve months following the last final.

Teams are then divided into sixteen groups within which even team plays all the others over a two-year period until sixteen winning teams remain. During the group phase, game length is capped at four hours to prevent player exhaustion. Inevitably this means that some group games have no Snitch catches, but are decided on goals alone. Any win in the group phase counts for two points. A win by more than 150 points earns an additional five points, by 100 an additional 3 points and 50, 1 point. In the case of a tie on points, the Winner is the team who caught the Snitch most often — or most quickly during its matches.

The final sixteen are ranked according to the points they won during the group phase. The team with most points plays the team with least, the team with the second most points plays the team with the second least and so on. In theory, the two best teams will remain to play each other in the final.

Referees are chosen by the ICWQC.

Infamous Tournaments

No Quidditch World Cup is without its controversies, but some stand out. A few of the most infamous are listed below.

Attack of the Killer Forest

The ghastly climax of the 1809 final between Romania and New Spain (what is now known as Mexico) has gone down in wizarding history as the worst exhibition of temper ever given by an individual player. Niko Nenad's teammates had become so concerned by his ferocious outbursts during the quarter- and semi-finals that they tried to persuade their manager to substitute him for the final advice that was sadly ignored by the ambitious old wizard. After the game, Nenad's teammate Ivan Popa (winner of an International Wizarding Order of Merlin for his life-saving actions during the catastrophe) told an international inquiry: 'over the preceding weeks we'd seen Niko beat himself over the head with his broom and set fire to his own feet in frustration. I'd personallv stopped him strangling two referees. However, I had no suspicion about whathe was planning to do if the final didn't go our way. I mean, who'd suspect that? You'd have to be as mental as he was. ' Precisely when and how Nenad managed to jinx

an entire forest on the edge of the West Siberian Plain is open to speculation, although he is thought to have had accomplices among unprincipled fans and was later proven to have paid local Dark wizards substantial sums. After two hours of play, Romania were behind on points and looking tired. It was then that Nenad deliberately hit a Bludger out of the stadium into the forest beyond the pitch. The effect was instantaneous and murderous. The trees sprang to life, wrenched their roots out of the ground and marched upon the stadium, flattening everything in their path, causing numerous injuries and several fatalities. What had been a Quidditch match turned swiftly into a human versus tree battle, which the wizards won only after seven hours' hard fighting. Nenad was not prosecuted as he had been killed early on by a particularly violent spruce.

The Tournament that Nobody Remembers

The ICWQC insists that a tournament has been held every four years since 1473. This is a source of pride, proving as it does that nothing — wars, adverse weather conditions or Muggle interference — can stop wizards playing Quidditch. There is, however, a mystery surrounding the tournament of 1877. The competition was undoubtedly planned: a venue chosen (the Ryn Desert in Kazakhstan), publicity materials produced, tickets sold. In August, however, the wizarding world woke up to the fact that they had no memory whatsoever of the tournament taking place. Neither those in possession of tickets nor any of the players could remember a single game. However, for reasons none of them understood, English Beater Lucas Bargeworthy was missing most of his teeth, Canadian Seeker Angelus Peel's knees were on backwards and half the Argentinian team were found tied up in the basement of a pub in Cardiff. Precisely what had — or had not taken place during the tournament has never been satisfactorily proven. Theories range from a Mass Memory Charm perpetuated by the Goblin Liberation Front (at that time very active and attracting a number of disaffected anarchist wizards) or the breakout of Cerebrumous Spattergroit, a virulent sub-strain of the more common Spattergroit, which causes severe confusion and memory' impairment. In any case, it was deemed appropriate to re-stage the tournament in 1878 and it has been held every four years since, which accounts for the slight anomaly in the 'every four years since 1473' sequence.

Royston Idlewind and the Dissimulators

In 1971 the ICWQC appointed a new International Director, Australian wizard Royston Idlewind. An ex-player who had been part

of his country's World Cup-Winning team of 1966, he was nevertheless a contentious choice for International Director due to his hard-line views on crowd control — a stance undoubtedly influenced by the many jinxes he had endured as Australia's star Chaser. Idlewind's statement that he considered the crowd 'the only thing I don't like about Quidditch' did not endear him to fans. Their feelings turned to outright hostility when he proceeded to bring in a number of draconian regulations, the worst being a total ban on all wands from the stadium except those carried by ICWQC officials. Many fans threatened to boycott the 1974 World Cup in protest but as empty stands were Idlewind's secret ambition, their never stood a chance. The tournament duly commenced and while crowd turnout was reduced, the appearance of 'Dissimulators', an innovative new style of musical instrument, enlivened every match. These multi-coloured tube-like objects emitted loud cries of support and puffs of smoke in national colours. As the tournament progressed, the Dissimulator craze grew, as did the crowds. By the time the Syria-Madagascar final arrived, the stands were packed with a record crowd of wizards, each carring his or her own Dissimulator. Upon the appearance of Royston Idlewind in the box for dignitaries and high-ranking officials, a hundred thousand Dissimulators emitted loud raspberries and were transformed instantly into the wands they had been disguising all along. Humiliated by the mass flouting of his pet law, Royston Idlewind resigned instantly. Even the supporters of the losers, Madagascar, had something to celebrate during the rest of the long, raucous night.

Reappearance of the Dark Mark

Possibly the most infamous World Cup Final of the last few centuries was the Ireland- Bulgaria match of 1994, which took place on Dartmoor, England. During the post-match celebrations of Ireland's triumph there was an outbreak of unprecedented violence as supporters of Lord Voldemort attacked fellow wizards and captured and tortured local Muggles. For the first time in fourteen years, the Dark Mark appeared in the sky, which caused widespread alarm and resulted in many injuries among the crowd. The ICWQC censured the Ministry of Magic heavily after the event, judging that security arrangements had been inadequate given the known existence of a violent Pure-blood tendency in the United Kingdom. Royston Idlewind emerged briefly from retirement to give the following statement to the Daily Prophet: 'a wand ban doesn't look so stupid now, does it?'

Quidditch World Cup (1990 - 2014)

1990

Canada 270, Scotland 240

It was “a bitter disappointment” for Scotland, as Scottish Seeker Hector Lamont missed the Golden Snitch by millimetres. In a post-match interview, Lamont famously blamed his father “Stubby” Lamont for not giving him longer fingers.

1994

Ireland 170, Bulgaria 160

The on-pitch action was very much overshadowed by the events that followed this match. A spectacular Snitch capture by young Seeker Viktor Krum was enough to salvage Bulgarian dignity, but not to secure a win.

1998

Malawi 260, Senegal 180

Only the second ever all-African final. Following the 1994 riots, security at this match was tighter than ever before. Senegal almost refused to play when their team mascots (Yumboes) were arrested outside the stadium. Yumboes are a kind of African house-elf and they took their arrest in reasonably good part, merely stealing every bit of food within a ten-mile radius in revenge and vanishing into the night.

2002

Egypt 450 , Bulgaria 300

Another crushing disappointment for Bulgaria. Viktor Krum was narrowly beaten to the Snitch by the outstanding Egyptian Seeker, Rawya Zaghloul. After the match, a tearful Krum announced his retirement.

2006

Burkina Faso 300, France 220

A popular win for the small African nation, whose Seeker Joshua Sankara was promptly named Burkinabé Minister for Magic. Two days later he resigned, pointing out that he’d much rather play Quidditch.

2010

Moldova 750, China 640

A furiously contested match that lasted 3 days and was widely held to have produced some of the finest Quidditch seen this century. The tiny country of Moldova has consistently produced excellent Quidditch teams and supporters were heartbroken that they failed to qualify this year due to an outbreak of Dragon Pox at their training camp.

The Quidditch World Cup 2014

This year's Quidditch World Cup promises to be as exciting as ever. The sixteen competing countries are: Brazil, Bulgaria, Chad, Fiji, Germany, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, USA and Wales.

Nigeria and Norway enter the tournament as the highest ranked teams. This is the first year that the USA is thought to have a reasonable chance of reaching the final. Much interest has been generated by the return to the Bulgarian side of the previously retired Mktor Krum, who at 38 is old for a Seeker but whose stated aim is 'to win the World Cup before I die.' For this reason, Bulgaria is attracting support from those whose countries have not qualified. Liechtenstein caused a serious upset in the qualifying stages by winning the group over China, the runners-up in 2010. Liechtenstein's team mascot is a gloomy, oversized Augurey called Hans who has his own fan club.

Other than this, nothing out of the ordinary has been reported. Rumours that Haiti have used Inferi to intimidate opposing teams have been dismissed by the ICWQC as 'malicious and baseless.' Accusations that Polish Seeker Bonawentura Wojcik is actually the famous Italian Seeker Luciano Volpi, Transfigured, Were only disproven when Luciano Volpi agreed to a press conference by Wojcik's side. Welsh manager Gwenog Jones, formerly of the Holyhead Harpies, threatened to 'curse the face off' rival Brazilian manager José Barboza when he called her Chasers 'talentless hags', a comment he later insisted had been taken out of context.

Opening games will take place next month in the Patagonian desert.

Scottish Rugby

The wizarding world's affection for the Scottish rugby team is all the more bizarre because a substantial part of wizarding society knows nothing about Muggle sports, which they regard as inherently dull and even silly. Yet the Scottish rugby team has become a wizarding meme – part in-joke, part genuine interest – which has its roots in the nineteenth century and is a tale both sad and uplifting.

The wizarding family of Buchanan lived in a village in the Scottish Borders for many generations. A reputation for aggression and drunkenness, coupled with their prodigious size (the daughters alone had won the village tug-of-war every year in living memory), kept their neighbours at a respectful distance and ignorant of their magical abilities. One by one, as they reached the age of eleven, the Buchanan

sons and daughters would disappear to Hogwarts. The village whispered that the enormous, wild children were being removed to a corrective facility or even a mental institution.

By the mid-nineteenth century the Buchanan family comprised an overworked mother, a fierce father and eleven children. The household was loud and chaotic, but even so, it is surprising that neither of the Buchanan parents realised that their third son, Angus, was a Squib – a wizard-born child with no magical powers. It had always been the proud boast of Mr Buchanan senior that such an anomaly had never occurred in their family. The proud old warlock went further: a Squib in any family was a sign that they were in decline and deserved to be winnowed out.

His brothers and sisters were all very fond of Angus, who was the largest and kindest of them all, so they covered up for him in front of his parents. The deception was innocently begun, but as the time approached for him to leave for Hogwarts, Angus and his siblings became uneasily aware that they could not maintain the pretense much longer. No letter from school arrived for Angus, but his panicking sister Flora forged one, which kept the parents in ignorance for several weeks more. Shy, good-natured and frightened of his father, Angus could not think of any alternative but to play along with his older siblings. They took him to Diagon Alley, where they bought a wand and pretended that it had chosen him. On the appointed day, his big brother Hamish took him to Hogwarts on the back of his broomstick, hoping against desperate hope that Angus would be allowed to stay once they got there, or that the school might be able to tease some magic out of him.

It had never happened before and it has never happened since, but Angus got as far as the Sorting Hat before he was exposed. In sheer desperation he threw himself ahead of a girl whose name had been called and placed the Hat upon his head. The horror of the moment when the Hat announced kindly that the boy beneath it was a good-hearted chap, but no wizard, would never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. Angus took off the hat and left the hall with tears streaming down his face.

News of Angus's humiliation reached his parents in a flurry of owls before their son arrived home on foot. He was met by his humiliated father, who barred his entrance, bade him never darken their door again, and fired curses after Angus as he fled.

Without any idea of what he would do next, without family or money, the eleven-year-old Angus walked to the capital, occasionally hitching rides on carts. In Edinburgh he lied about his age and managed to find work as a labourer.

To Angus's surprise, Muggles were not nearly as bad as his father

and mother had always told him. He had the good fortune to be taken in by a kind foreman and his wife who had no children of their own, and by the time he was eighteen, Angus had grown into a big strong man who was loved for his kind nature and admired for his physical prowess, but who never shared the strange secrets of his past.

Angus's early childhood had been spent dodging curses on an almost daily basis, which meant that he was surprisingly fast for a man of his size. He found his greatest pleasure and pride in athleticism, and soon became adept at the relatively new Muggle sport of rugby. Years of helping his siblings catch Golden Snitches in the back garden also made him a natural at cricket.

In 1871 Angus found himself representing his country in the first ever international rugby match, which took place in Edinburgh between England and Scotland. Angus's emotion can perhaps be imagined as he walked out onto the pitch and saw all ten of his brothers and sisters among the spectators. Defying their father's contempt for all Muggle pursuits and his injunction against ever seeing Angus again, they had set out to track him down. Elated, Angus scored the first try. Scotland won the match.

Reunion with his family caused Angus to reevaluate his relationship with his magical roots and in 1900 he published the groundbreaking worldwide bestseller *My Life As A Squib*. Until this point, Squibs had lived in the shadows. Some clung to the fringes of the wizarding world, always feeling second-class and trying to fit in; others cut all ties and lived entirely as Muggles, often repudiating their beginnings. *My Life As A Squib* brought the plight of these individuals to the wizarding world's attention.

Thus Angus Buchanan became world-famous among wizards whilst also being celebrated among Muggles, a hitherto unknown achievement. Wizards of many nationalities began turning up to watch him play sport. Unfortunately, cricket found little favour with wizardkind. As the chief sports writer in the Daily Prophet wrote in 1902: "A Beater who is unable to fly defends three sticks instead of a hoop, while a Snitch without wings is thrown at the sticks. That's it. Sometimes for several days". Rugby held more appeal. Wizards could not help but admire the strength and courage of Muggles prepared to engage in a sport so brutal, without recourse to Disapparating out of the way, or access to Skele-Gro to repair broken bones. It must be admitted that there was an edge of sadism to some wizards' enjoyment.

When Angus Buchanan died, he was honoured by both wizarding and Muggle worlds, an almost unique achievement in the annals of history. A shining example of a person who had made the most of the hand that life had dealt them and emerged triumphant, Angus was too

modest to realise the impact that he had had. The Angus Buchanan Cup for Outstanding Effort is awarded at Hogwarts each year and *My Life as A Squib* is on its 110th printing.

When it comes to wizarding sports and games (Quidditch, Quodpot, Creaothceann – officially banned but still played illegally – broom-racing, Gobstones and so forth) wizards are naturally fiercely partisan and support their own country, but it is considered infra dig for wizards to support any rugby team other than Scotland. Over the nearly 150 years since Angus Buchanan helped win the first international rugby match, discussing Scottish rugby has become one of several covert identifiers for wizards meeting in front of Muggles and seeking to establish each other's credentials. Eavesdropping Muggles might be puzzled as to why two Peruvians are so interested in a Scottish team, but it is generally agreed that this is preferable to arguing about Quidditch or comparing wand lengths in public.

Shortly after Angus's death, the Wizarding Supporters of Scottish Rugby Union was set up in his memory by his devoted fans. The WSSRU, which exists to this day, has both Scottish and foreign wizarding members. They meet on the eve of every Scottish international match to toast Angus's memory and anticipate a happy eighty minutes of watching Muggles trample each other into the mud. The International Statute of Secrecy expressly forbids wizards to participate in Muggle sport, but there is nothing illegal in supporting a Muggle side. However, the WSSRU has often had to deny the persistent rumour that its secret mission is to smuggle a talented Squib on to every Scottish team. Current suspects include Kelly Brown (possible cousin of Lavender's), Jim Hamilton (strong resemblance to Hagrid) and Stuart Hogg (enough said).

Beauxbatons Academy of Magic

Thought to be situated somewhere in the Pyrenees, visitors speak of the breath-taking beauty of a chateau surrounded by formal gardens and lawns created out of the mountainous landscape by magic. Beauxbatons Academy has a preponderance of French students, though Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Luxembourgians and Belgians also attend in large numbers (both Beauxbatons and Durmstrang have a larger studentship than Hogwarts). It is said that the stunning castle and grounds of this prestigious school were part-funded by alchemist gold, for Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel met at Beauxbatons in their youth, and a magnificent fountain in the middle of the school's park, believed to have healing and beautifying properties, is named for

them.

Beauxbatons has always enjoyed a cordial relationship with Hogwarts, though there has been a healthy rivalry in international competitions such as the Triwizard Tournament, in which Beauxbatons has sixty-two wins to Hogwarts' sixty-three.

Apart from the Flamels, famous ex-students of Beauxbatons include Vincent Duc de Trefle-Picques, who escaped the Terror by casting a concealment charm on his neck and pretending that his head had already been cut off; Luc Millefeuille, the infamous pastry-maker and Muggle-poisoner, and Fleur Delacour, who fought in the world-famous Battle of Hogwarts and was awarded medals of bravery from both the French and British Ministries of Magic. Headmistress Olympe Maxime is (in spite of her protestations to the contrary) half-giantess; brilliant, elegant and undeniably awe-inspiring.

Durmstrang Institute

Durmstrang once had the darkest reputation of all eleven wizarding schools, though this was never entirely merited. It is true that Durmstrang, which has turned out many truly great witches and wizards, has twice in its history fallen under the stewardship of wizards of dubious allegiance or nefarious intent, and that it has one infamous ex-pupil.

The first of these unhappy men, Harfang Munter, took over the school shortly after the mysterious death of its founder, the great Bulgarian witch Nerida Vulchanova. Munter established Durmstrang's reputation for duelling and all forms of martial magic, which remain an impressive part of its curriculum today. The second dark period in Durmstrang's history came with the Headmastership of Igor Karkaroff, an ex-Death Eater who fled his post upon the return from exile of Lord Voldemort, fearing the latter's retribution. Karkaroff was an unprincipled and egotistical man who encouraged a culture of fear and intimidation among the students, and many parents withdrew their children from Durmstrang while he was in charge.

The ex-pupil who has done more than any other to cause damage to Durmstrang's reputation is Gellert Grindelwald, one of the most dangerous wizards of the twentieth century. However, in recent years Durmstrang has undergone something of a renaissance, and has produced such international luminaries as international Quidditch star Viktor Krum.

Although believed to be situated in the far north of Europe,

Durmstrang is one of the most secretive of all schools about its whereabouts, so nobody can be quite certain. Visitors, who must comply with memory charms to erase their knowledge of how they got there, speak of vast, sprawling grounds with many stunning views, not least of the great, dark, spectral ship that is moored on a mountain lake behind the school, from which students dive in summertime.

Daily Prophet

There is only one wizarding newspaper in Britain, discounting such small circulation publications such as The Quibbler. The Daily Prophet, whose headquarters are in Diagon Alley, is delivered by owl on a daily basis to nearly every wizarding household in Britain. Payment is effected by placing coins in the pouch tied to the paper-owl's leg. Occasionally (when something particularly interesting or exciting happens, such as the illegal flight of a Ford Anglia the length of Britain) an Evening Prophet edition will be rushed out.

The Prophet is not an entirely unbiased source of news, and sometimes displays unfortunately sensationalist tendency best epitomised by star reporter Rita Skeeter. Ostensibly an independent news source, it has more than once been influenced by the Ministry (or ruling power) of the day to hush up certain stories. A clue to its overriding motivation may be found in its name, 'prophet' being a homonym of 'profit' (although I was also taken with the idea of a wizarding newspaper claiming foreknowledge of news to come.)

Wizardkind tends not to require alternative political flavours in its news coverage (which is not to say, however, that the Prophet does not have a political agenda). As a small, outsider and occasionally beleaguered community, wizards are, by and large, interested in the same kinds of stories: the Quidditch League results, whether anyone is in trouble for infractions of the International Statute of Secrecy, what irritating legislation the Misuse of Muggle Artefacts Office has come up with now, and when the next Celestina Warbeck/Weird Sisters concert will take place.

It seems likely that wizards will continue to favour old-fashioned newsprint, even while the Muggle world resorts increasingly to the internet. If Muggle newspapers had moving photographs, their circulation might be similarly buoyant.

The Great Lake

The grounds of Hogwarts function partly as a nature reserve for magical creatures which have difficulty existing in Muggle-inhabited areas. The lake is full of creatures that would make a Muggle naturalist swoon with delight - if terror did not seize them first. There are Grindylows (vicious little water demons), merpeople (of a hardy Scottish strain) and a giant squid, which is semi-domesticated and permits students to tickle its tentacles on sunny days, when it basks in the shallows.

Giant squid genuinely exist, though they are most mysterious creatures. Although their extraordinary bodies have been washed up all over the world, it was not until 2006 that a live giant squid was captured on film by Muggles. I strongly suspect them of having magical powers.

The lake is the setting for the second task that the Triwizard competitors must face in Goblet of Fire, which is also my favourite task. I find it satisfyingly creepy; I like the diversity of the methods employed by the competitors to breathe underwater, and I enjoyed plumbing the depths of a part of the grounds that had never been seen before. In the original draft of Chamber of Secrets, I had Harry and Ron crash into the lake in Mr Weasley's Ford Anglia, and meet the merpeople there for the first time. At that time I had a vague notion that the lake might lead to other places, and that the merpeople might play a larger role in the later books than they did, so I thought that Harry ought to be introduced to both at this stage. However, the Whomping Willow provided a more satisfying, less distracting crash, and served a later purpose in Prisoner of Azkaban, too. The Great Lake (which is really a Scottish loch, apparently freshwater and landlocked) never did develop as a portal to other seas or rivers, although the appearance of the Durmstrang ship from its depths in Goblet of Fire hints at the fact that if you are travelling by an enchanted craft, you might be able to take a magical shortcut to other waterways.

Owls

The old British superstition that it is unlucky to see owls flying by daylight is readily explained, for when wizards break cover to send messages by day, something dramatic must be afoot in the magical world. Muggles may subsequently experience the unpleasant aftershocks, without any idea of their cause.

As a (mostly) nocturnal bird of prey, the owl is inevitably seen as sinister by Muggles, but it has been a faithful servant and helpmeet to

witches and wizards for many centuries. In spite of the many alternatives available for magical communication across long distances, (including Patronuses, Floo powder, and enchanted devices such as mirrors and even coins) the faithful and reliable owl remains the most common method used by wizardkind across the world.

The advantages of owls as messengers are those very qualities that make Muggles view them with suspicion: they operate under cover of darkness, to which Muggles have a superstitious aversion; they have exceptionally well-developed night vision, are agile, stealthy and capable of aggression when challenged. So numerous are the owls employed by wizards worldwide that it is generally safe to assume that virtually all of them are either the property of the Owl Postal Service of their country, or of an individual witch or wizard.

Whether because they possess an innate bent for magic (just as pigs are reputed to be innately non-magical), or because generations of their ancestors have been domesticated and trained by wizards and they have inherited the traits that make this easy, owls learn very quickly, and seem to thrive on their task of tracing and tracking the witch or wizard for whom their letters are intended.

The mystical association between the name and the human who bears it has long been understood by witches and wizards of all cultures. While the process remains mysterious even to those who train up owlets to become wizarding pets or postal owls, the birds appear to be able to make such a connection between the name and its possessor that enables them to trace the witch or wizard concerned wherever he or she may be. An owl does not need to know an address, although witches and wizards generally add the place to the envelope on the off-chance that the owl is intercepted and the letter falls into other hands.

Should a witch or wizard not wish to be sent letters (or tracked in any other way), he or she will have to resort to Repelling, Disguising or Masking Spells, of which there are a great range. It is possible to protect yourself from all correspondence, or all but that carried by a specific owl. If a witch or wizard is determined not to be contactable by a persistent creditor or ex-boy or girlfriend, they might try a masking spell specific to that person, but this ploy is easily circumnavigated by asking somebody else to send the owl. In general, it takes strong protective magic, and a willingness to forego a lot of birthday cards, to avoid the attentions of Owl Post.

Trained owls are expensive, and it is quite usual for a wizarding family to share a single owl, or else only use Postal owls.

My love of, and fascination with, owls long pre-dates the first idea for Harry Potter. I trace it to a cuddly owl toy that my mother made me when I was six or seven, which I adored. Of course, owls have

been associated with magic for a long time, and feature in many old illustrations of witches and wizards, second only to cats as Most Magical Creature. The owl's association with wisdom was established in Roman times, for it is the emblem of Minerva, goddess of wisdom.

Owl breeds shown within the Harry Potter books include the eagle owl (large, tufted and fierce-looking, owned by Draco Malfoy); the Little Owl (tiny, cute, but perhaps not very impressive, like Pigwidgeon, owned by Ron); and the Snowy Owl, which is also known as the Ghost Owl (Harry's Hedwig).

I made a few elementary mistakes when it came to my depiction of Hedwig. Firstly, Snowy Owls are diurnal (ie, they fly by day). Secondly, they are virtually mute, so Hedwig's frequent hoots and chirrups of approval and comfort should be taken as signs of her magically enhanced abilities. Thirdly, as countless well-meaning owl-lovers and experts kept writing to me in the early days, owls do not eat bacon (Hedwig enjoys a bit of bacon rind when she delivers post at breakfast).

When I dreamed up Errol, the aged, long-suffering and overworked Weasley family owl, I had in mind a picture I thought I had seen, which featured a very comical, large, fluffy, grey, bewildered-looking bird whose breed I had never known. In fact, I wondered whether it had been a real photograph, or whether imagination was distorting the image. It was with sheer delight, therefore, that I rounded a corner on my first ever visit to the aviary at Leavesden Studios, where they were filming Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, and saw a line of big, grey, fluffy, bewildered-looking owls blinking back at me, each an exact replica of the half-remembered picture I thought I might have dreamed. They were all playing Errol, and they are Great Greys.

Pensieve

A Pensieve is a wide and shallow dish made of metal or stone, often elaborately decorated or inlaid with precious stones, and carrying powerful and complex enchantments. Pensieves are rare, because only the most advanced wizards ever use them, and because the majority of wizardkind is afraid of doing so.

The perceived dangers of the Pensieve relate to its power over memory or thought. The Pensieve is enchanted to recreate memories so that they become re-liveable, taking every detail stored in the subconscious and recreating it faithfully, so that either the owner, or (and herein lies the danger) a second party, is able to enter the memories and move around within them. Inevitably, those with things

to hide, those ashamed of their pasts, those eager to keep hold of their secrets, or protective of their privacy, will be wary of an object like the Pensieve.

Even more difficult than the recreation of memories is the use of a Pensieve to examine and sort thoughts and ideas, and very few wizards have the ability to do so. Albus Dumbledore is seen using the Hogwarts Pensieve in this way, notably in Chapter Thirty of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, when he adds thoughts to the Pensieve and Harry's face turns into Snape's; Dumbledore is reminding himself of the hidden connection between Snape and Harry (that Snape was in love with Harry's mother, and is now - though immensely grudgingly - honour-bound to protect him).

Traditionally, a witch or wizard's Pensieve, like their wand, is buried with them, as it is considered an intensely personal artefact; any thoughts or memories left inside the Pensieve are likewise interred with their owner, unless he or she has requested otherwise. The Hogwarts Pensieve, however, belongs not to any individual but to the school. It has been used by a long line of headmasters and headmistresses, who have also left behind their life experience in the form of memories. This forms an invaluable library of reference for the headmaster or headmistress of the day.

The Hogwarts Pensieve is made of ornately carved stone and is engraved with modified Saxon runes, which mark it as an artefact of immense antiquity that pre-dates the creation of the school. One (unsubstantiated) legend says that the founders discovered the Pensieve half-buried in the ground on the very spot where they decided to erect their school.

The name 'Pensieve' is a homonym of 'pensive', meaning deeply, seriously thoughtful; but it also a pun, the 'sieve' part of the word alluding to the object's function of sorting meanings from a mass of thoughts or memories.

Illness and Disability

I pondered the issue of illness and disability very early in the creation of Harry's world. Did wizards catch colds? Could they cure illnesses that baffled Muggles? Were there disabled wizards? What were the limits of wizarding medicine, or could it fix anything? Some of these questions went to the heart of the story, because the theme of death runs through every volume of the Potter books. Having decided that magic could not raise the dead (even the Resurrection Stone does not truly return the dead to life), I then had to decide what might kill

a wizard; what kind of illnesses they could catch; what injuries they might sustain, and which of the last two could be cured.

I decided that, broadly speaking, wizards would have the power to correct or override 'mundane' nature, but not 'magical' nature. Therefore, a wizard could catch anything a Muggle might catch, but he could cure all of it; he would also comfortably survive a scorpion sting that might kill a Muggle, whereas he might die if bitten by a Venomous Tentacula. Similarly, bones broken in non-magical accidents such as falls or fist fights can be mended by magic, but the consequences of curses or backfiring magic could be serious, permanent or life-threatening. This is the reason that Gilderoy Lockhart, victim of his own mangled Memory Charm, has permanent amnesia, why the poor Longbottoms remain permanently damaged by magical torture, and why Mad-Eye Moody had to resort to a wooden leg and a magical eye when the originals were irreparably damaged in a wizards' battle; Luna Lovegood's mother, Pandora, died when one of her own experimental spells went wrong, and Bill Weasley is irreversibly scarred after his meeting with Fenrir Greyback.

Thus it can be seen that while wizards have an enviable head start over the rest of us in dealing with the flu, and all manner of serious injuries, they have to deal with problems that the rest of us never face. Not only is the Muggle world free of such perils as Devil's Snare and Blast-Ended Skrewts, the Statute of Secrecy has also kept us free from contact with anyone who could pass on Dragon Pox (as the name implies, originally contracted by wizards working closely with Peruvian Vipertooths) or Spattergroit.

Remus Lupin's affliction was a conscious reference to blood-borne diseases such as the HIV infection, with the attendant stigma. The potion Snape brews him is akin to the antiretroviral that will keep him from the developing the 'full-blown' version of his illness. The sense of 'apartness' that the management of a chronic condition can impose on its sufferers was an important part of Lupin's character. Meanwhile, Mad-Eye Moody is the toughest Auror of them all, and a man who was very much more than his significant disabilities.

Harry Potter and the Order of Phoenix

Ministers for Magic

The Ministry of Magic was formally established in 1707 with the appointment of the very first man to hold the title 'Minister for Magic', Ulick Gamp.* The Minister for Magic is democratically elected, although there have been times of crisis in which the post has simply been offered to an individual without a public vote (Albus Dumbledore was made such an offer, and turned it down repeatedly). There is no fixed limit to a Minister's term of office, but he or she is obliged to hold regular elections at a maximum interval of seven years. Ministers for Magic tend to last much longer than Muggle ministers. Generally speaking, and despite many a moan and grumble, their community is behind them in a way that is rarely seen in the Muggle world. This is perhaps due to a feeling, on the part of wizards, that unless they are seen to manage themselves competently, the Muggles might try to interfere.

The Muggle Prime Minister has no part in appointing the Minister for Magic, whose election is a matter only for the magical community themselves. All matters relating to the magical community in Britain are managed solely by the Minister for Magic, and he has sole jurisdiction over his Ministry. Emergency visits to the Muggle Prime Minister by the Minister for Magic are announced by a portrait of Ulick Gamp (first Minister for Magic) that hangs in the Muggle Prime Minister's study in number 10 Downing Street.

No Muggle Prime Minister has ever set foot in the Ministry of Magic, for reasons most succinctly summed up by ex-Minister Dugald McPhail (term of office 1858-1865): 'their puir wee braines couldnae cope wi' it.'

*Prior to 1707, the Wizards' Council was the longest serving (though not the only) body to govern the magical community in Britain. After the imposition of the International Statute of Secrecy in 1692, however, the wizarding community needed a more highly structured, organised and more complex governing structure than they had hitherto used, to support, regulate and communicate with a community in hiding. Only witches and wizards who enjoyed the title of 'Minister for Magic' are included in this entry.

Ministers

Ulick Gamp

Term of Office: 1707 - 1718

Previously head of the Wizengamot, Gamp had the onerous job of policing a fractious and frightened community adjusting to the imposition of the International Statute of Secrecy. His greatest legacy was to found the Department of Magical Law Enforcement.

Damocles Rowle

Term of Office: 1718 - 1726

Rowle was elected on a platform of being 'tough on Muggles'. Censured by the International Confederation of Wizards, he was eventually forced to step down.

Perseus Parkinson

Term of Office: 1726 - 1733

Attempted to pass a bill making it illegal to marry a Muggle. Misread the public mood; the wizarding community, tired of anti-Muggle sentiment and wanting peace, voted him out at the first opportunity.

Eldritch Diggory

Term of Office: 1733 - 1747

Popular Minister who first established an Auror recruitment programme. Died in office (dragon pox)

Albert Boot

Term of Office: 1747 - 1752

Likeable, but inept. Resigned after a mismanaged goblin rebellion.

Basil Flack

Term of Office: 1752 - 1752

Shortest serving Minister. Lasted two months; resigned after the goblins joined forces with werewolves.

Hesphaestus Gore

Term of Office: 1752 - 1770

Gore was one of the earliest Aurors. Successfully put down a number of revolts by magical beings, although historians feel his

refusal to contemplate rehabilitation programmes for werewolves ultimately led to more attacks. Renovated and reinforced the prison of Azkaban.

Maximilian Crowdy

Term of Office: 1770 - 1781

Father of nine Crowdy was a charismatic leader who routed out several extremist pure-blood groups planning Muggle attacks. His mysterious death in office has been the subject of numerous books and conspiracy theories.

Porteus Knatchbull

Term of Office: 1781 - 1789

Was called in confidentially in 1782 by the Muggle Prime Minister of the day, Lord North, to see whether he could help with King George III's emerging mental instability. Word leaked out that Lord North believed in wizards, and he was forced to resign after a motion of no confidence.

Unctuous Osbert

Term of Office: 1789 - 1798

Widely seen as too much influenced by pure-bloods of wealth and status.

Artemisia Lufkin

Term of Office: 1798 - 1811

First female Minister for Magic. Established Department of International Magical Co-operation and lobbied hard and successfully to have a Quidditch World Cup tournament held in Britain during her term.

Grogan Stump

Term of Office: 1811 - 1819

Very popular Minister for Magic, a passionate Quidditch fan (Tutshill Tornados), established Department of Magical Games and Sports and managed to steer through legislation on magical beasts and beings that had long been a source of contention.

Josephina Flint

Term of Office: 1819 - 1827

Revealed an unhealthy anti-Muggle bias in office; disliked new

Muggle technology such as the telegraph, which she claimed interfered with proper wand function.

Ottaline Gambol

Term of Office: 1827 - 1835

A much more forward-looking Minister, Gambol established committees to investigate Muggle brainpower which seemed, during this period of the British Empire, to be greater than some wizards had credited.

Radolphus Lestrange

Term of Office: 1835 - 1841

Reactionary who attempted to close down the Department of Mysteries, which ignored him. Eventually resigned due to ill health, which was widely rumoured to be inability to cope with the strains of office.

Hortensia Milliphutt

Term of Office: 1841 - 1849

Introduced more legislation than any other sitting Minister, much of it useful, but some wearisome (hat pointiness and so on), which ultimately resulted in her political downfall.

Evangeline Orpington

Term of Office: 1849 - 1855

A good friend of Queen Victoria's, who never realised she was a witch, let alone Minister for Magic. Orpington is believed to have intervened magically (and illegally) in the Crimean War.

Priscilla Dupont

Term of Office: 1855 - 1858

Conceived an irrational loathing of the Muggle Prime Minister Lord Palmerston, to an extent that caused such trouble (coins turning to frogspawn in his coat pockets, etc.) that she was forced to step down. Ironically, Palmerston was forced to resign by the Muggles two days later.

Dugald McPhail

Term of Office: 1858 - 1865

A safe pair of hands. While the Muggle parliament underwent a period of marked upheaval, the Ministry of Magic knew a period of welcome calm.

Faris “Spout-hole” Spavin

Term of Office: 1865 - 1903

Longest-ever serving Minister for Magic, and also the most long-winded, he survived an ‘assassination attempt’ (kicking) from a centaur who resented the punchline of Spavin’s infamous ‘a centaur, a ghost and a dwarf walk into a bar’ joke. Attended Queen Victoria’s funeral in an admiral’s hat and spats, at which point the Wizengamot suggested gently that it was time he move aside (Spavin was 147 when he left office).

Venusia Crickerly

Term of Office: 1903 - 1912

Second ex-Auror to take office and considered both competent and likeable, Crickerly died in a freak gardening accident (mandrake related).

Archer Evermonde

Term of Office: 1912 - 1923

In post during the Muggle First World War, Evermonde passed emergency legislation forbidding witches and wizards to get involved, lest they risk mass infractions of the International Statute of Secrecy. Thousands defied him, aiding Muggles where they could.

Lorcan McLaird

Term of Office: 1923 - 1925

A gifted wizard, but an unlikely politician, McLaird was an exceptionally taciturn man who preferred to communicate in monosyllables and expressive puffs of smoke that he produced through the end of his wand. Forced from office out of sheer irritation at his eccentricities.

Hector Fawley

Term of Office: 1925 - 1939

Undoubtedly voted in because of his marked difference to McLaird, the ebullient and flamboyant Fawley did not take sufficiently seriously the threat presented to the world wizarding community by Gellert Grindelwald. He paid with his job.

Leonard Spencer-Moon

Term of Office: 1939 - 1948

A sound Minister who rose through the ranks from being tea-boy in the Department of Magical Accidents and Catastrophes. Oversaw a great period of international wizarding and Muggle conflict. Enjoyed a

good working relationship with Winston Churchill.

Wilhelmina Tuft

Term of Office: 1948 - 1959

Cheery witch who presided over a period of welcome peace and prosperity. Died in office after discovering, too late, her allergy to Alihotsy-flavoured fudge.

Ignatius Tuft

Term of Office: 1959 - 1962

Son of the above. A hard-liner who capitalised on his mother's popularity to gain election. Promised to institute a controversial and dangerous Dementor breeding program and was forced from office.

Nobby Leach

Term of Office: 1962 - 1968

First Muggle-born Minister for Magic, his appointment caused consternation among the old (pure-blood) guard, many of whom resigned government posts in protest. Has always denied having anything to do with England's 1966 World Cup Win. Left office after contracting mysterious illness (conspiracy theories abound).

Eugenia Jenkins

Term of Office: 1968 - 1975

Jenkins dealt competently with pure-blood riots during Squib Rights marches in the late sixties, but was soon confronted with the first rise of Lord Voldemort. Jenkins was soon ousted from office as inadequate to the challenge.

Harold Minchum

Term of Office: 1975 - 1980

Seen as a hard-liner, he placed even more Dementors around Azkaban, but was unable to contain what looked like Voldemort's unstoppable rise to power.

Millicent Bagnold

Term of Office: 1980 - 1990

A highly able Minister. Had to answer to the International Confederation of Wizards for the number of breaches of the International Statute of Secrecy on the day and night following Harry Potter's survival of Lord Voldemort's attack. Acquitted herself

magnificently with the now infamous words: ‘I assert our inalienable right to party’, which drew cheers from all present.

Cornelius Fudge

Term of Office: 1990 - 1996

A career politician overly-fond of the old guard. Persistent denial of the continuing threat of Lord Voldemort ultimately cost him his job.

Rufus Scrimgeour

Term of Office: 1996 - 1997

The third ex-Auror to gain office, Scrimgeour died in office at the hands of Lord Voldemort.

Pius Thicknesse

Term of Office: 1997 - 1998

Omitted from most official records, as he was under the Imperius Curse for his entire term of office, and unconscious of anything that he was doing.

Kingsley Shacklebolt

Term of Office: 1998 - present

Oversaw the capture of Death Eaters and Voldemort supporters following the death of Lord Voldemort. Initially named as ‘caretaker Minister’, Shacklebolt was subsequently elected to the office.

Thestrals

Manifesting as black, skeletal, bat-winged horses, but invisible to all who have never been truly touched by death, Thestrals have a somewhat macabre reputation. In centuries past the sight of them was regarded as unlucky; they have been hunted and ill treated for many years, their true nature (which is kindly and gentle) being widely misunderstood. Thestrals are not marks of ill omen, nor (their spooky appearance notwithstanding) are they in any way threatening to humans, always allowing for the fright that the first sight of them tends to give the observer.

Being able to see Thestrals is a sign that the beholder has witnessed death, and gained an emotional understanding of what death means. It is unsurprising that it took a long time for their significance to be properly understood, because the precise moment when such knowledge dawns varies greatly from person to person. Harry Potter was unable to see Thestrals for years after his mother was killed in front of him, because he was barely out of babyhood when the murder happened, and he had been unable to comprehend his own loss. Even after the death of Cedric Diggory, weeks elapsed before the full import of death's finality was borne upon him. Only at this point did the Thestrals that pull the carriages from Hogsmeade Station to Hogwarts castle become visible to him. On the other hand, Luna Lovegood, who lost her own mother when she was young, saw Thestrals very soon afterwards because she is intuitive, spiritual and unafraid of the afterlife.

While somewhat intimidating in appearance, these carnivorous horses are emblematic of a journey to another dimension, and reward all who trust them with faithfulness and obedience. Thestrals are native to the British Isles and Ireland, though they have been spotted in parts of France and the Iberian Peninsula; they seem to have an association with wizards who descend from the horse-loving Celtic peoples. Other parts of the world have their own equivalent to Thestrals.

Dolores Umbridge

Birth Day August

Wand and dragon heartstring, eight inches long

Hogwarts house

Special abilities quill is of her own invention.

Parentage Muggle mother, wizard father

Family Married, no children

Hobbies Collecting the 'Frolicsome Feline' ornamental plate range, adding flounces to fabric and frills to stationary objects, inventing instruments of torture

Dolores Jane Umbridge was the eldest child and only daughter of Orford Umbridge, a wizard, and Ellen Cracknell, a Muggle, who also had a Squib son. Dolores's parents were unhappily married, and Dolores secretly despised both of them: Orford for his lack of ambition (he had never been promoted, and worked in the Department of Magical Maintenance at the Ministry of Magic), and her mother, Ellen, for her flightiness, untidiness, and Muggle lineage. Both Orford and his daughter blamed Ellen for Dolores's brother's lack of magical ability, with the result that when Dolores was fifteen, the family split down the middle, Orford and Dolores remaining together, and Ellen vanishing back into the Muggle world with her son. Dolores never saw her mother or brother again, never spoke of either of them, and henceforth pretended to all she met that she was a pure-blood.

An accomplished witch, Dolores joined the Ministry of Magic directly after she left Hogwarts, taking a job as a lowly intern in the Improper Use of Magic Office. Even at seventeen, Dolores was judgemental, prejudiced and sadistic, although her conscientious attitude, her saccharine manner towards her superiors, and the ruthlessness and stealth with which she took credit for other people's work soon gained her advancement. Before she was thirty, Dolores had been promoted to Head of the office, and it was but a short step from there to ever more senior positions in the management of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. By this time, she had persuaded her father to take early retirement, and by making him a small financial allowance, she ensured that he dropped quietly out of sight. Whenever she was asked (usually by workmates who did not like her) 'are you related to that Umbridge who used to mop the floors here?' she would smile her sweetest, laugh, and deny any connection whatsoever, claiming that her deceased father had been a distinguished member of the Wizengamot. Nasty things tended to happen to people who asked about Orford, or anything that Dolores did not like talking about, and people who wanted to remain on her good side pretended to believe her version of her ancestry.

In spite of her best efforts to secure the affections of one of her superiors (she never cared particularly which of them it was, but knew that her own status and security would be advanced with a powerful husband), Dolores never succeeded in marrying. While they valued her hard work and ambition, those who got to know her best found it

difficult to like her very much. After a glass of sweet sherry, Dolores was always prone to spout very uncharitable views, and even those who were anti-Muggle found themselves shocked by some of Dolores's suggestions, behind closed doors, of the treatment that the non-magical community deserved.

As she grew older and harder, and rose higher within the Ministry, Dolores's taste in little girlish accessories grew more and more pronounced; her office became a place of frills and furbelows, and she liked anything decorated with kittens (though found the real thing inconveniently messy). As the Minister for Magic Cornelius Fudge became increasingly anxious and paranoid that Albus Dumbledore had ambitions to supersede him, Dolores managed to claw her way to the very heart of power, by stoking both Fudge's vanity and his fears, and presenting herself as one of the few he could trust.

Dolores's appointment as Inquisitor at Hogwarts gave full scope, for the first time in her life, for her prejudices and her cruelty. She had not enjoyed her time at school, where she had been overlooked for all positions of responsibility, and she relished the chance to return and wield power over those who had not (as she saw it) given her her due.

Dolores has what amounts to a phobia of beings that are not quite, or wholly, human. Her distaste for the half-giant Hagrid, and her terror of centaurs, reveal a terror of the unknown and the wild. She is an immensely controlling person, and all who challenge her authority and world-view must, in her opinion, be punished. She actively enjoys subjugating and humiliating others, and except in their declared allegiances, there is little to choose between her and Bellatrix Lestrange.

Dolores's time at Hogwarts ended disastrously, because she overreached the remit Fudge had given her, stepping outside the bounds of her own authority, carried away with a fanatical sense of self-purpose. Shaken but unrepentant after a catastrophic end to her Hogwarts career, she returned to a Ministry which had been plunged into turmoil due to the return of Lord Voldemort.

In the change of regimes that followed Fudge's forced resignation, Dolores was able to slip back into her former position at the Ministry. The new Minister, Rufus Scrimgeour, had more immediate problems pressing in on him than Dolores Umbridge. Scrimgeour was later punished for this oversight, because the fact that the Ministry had never punished Dolores for her many abuses of power seemed to Harry Potter to reveal both its complacency and its carelessness. Harry considered Dolores's continuing employment, and the lack of any repercussions for her behaviour at Hogwarts, a sign of the Ministry's essential corruption, and refused to cooperate with the new Minister

because of it (Dolores is the only person, other than Lord Voldemort, to leave a permanent physical scar on Harry, having forced him to cut the words 'I must not tell lies' on the back of his own hand during detention).

Dolores was soon enjoying life at the Ministry more than ever. When the Ministry was taken over by the puppet Minister Pius Thicknesse, and infiltrated by the Dark Lord's followers, Dolores was in her true element at last. Correctly judged, by senior Death Eaters, to have much more in common with them than she ever had with Albus Dumbledore, she not only retained her post but was given extra authority, becoming Head of the Muggle-born Registration Commission, which was in effect a kangaroo court that imprisoned all Muggle-borns on the basis that they had 'stolen' their wands and their magic.

It was as she sat in judgement of another innocent woman that Harry Potter finally attacked Dolores in the very heart of the Ministry, and stole from her the Horcrux she had unwittingly been wearing.

With the fall of Lord Voldemort, Dolores Umbridge was put on trial for her enthusiastic co-operation with his regime, and convicted of the torture, imprisonment and deaths of several people (some of the innocent Muggle-borns she sentenced to Azkaban did not survive their ordeal).

Once, long ago, I took instruction in a certain skill or subject (I am being vague as vague can be, for reasons that are about to become obvious), and in doing so, came into contact with a teacher or instructor whom I disliked intensely on sight. The woman in question returned my antipathy with interest. Why we took against each other so instantly, heartily and (on my side, at least) irrationally, I honestly cannot say. What sticks in my mind is her pronounced taste for twee accessories. I particularly recall a tiny little plastic bow slide, pale lemon in colour that she wore in her short curly hair. I used to stare at that little slide, which would have been appropriate to a girl of three, as though it was some kind of repellant physical growth. She was quite a stocky woman, and not in the first flush of youth, and her tendency to wear frills where (I felt) frills had no business to be, and to carry undersized handbags, again as though they had been borrowed from a child's dressing-up box, jarred, I felt, with a personality that I found the reverse of sweet, innocent and ingenuous.

I am always a little wary when talking about these kinds of sources of inspiration, because it is infuriating to hear yourself misinterpreted in ways that can cause other people a great deal of hurt. This woman was NOT 'the real Dolores Umbridge'. She did not look like a toad, she was never sadistic or vicious to me or anyone else, and I never heard her express a single view in common with Umbridge (indeed, I never

knew her well enough to know much about her views or preferences, which makes my dislike of her even less justifiable). However, it is true to say that I borrowed from her, then grossly exaggerated, a taste for the sickly sweet and girlish in dress, and it was that tiny little pale lemon plastic bow that I was remembering when I perched the fly-like ornament on Dolores Umbridge's head.

I have noticed more than once in life that a taste for the ineffably twee can go hand-in-hand with a distinctly uncharitable outlook on the world. I once shared an office with a woman who had covered the wall space behind her desk with pictures of fluffy kitties; she was the most bigoted, spiteful champion of the death penalty with whom it has ever been my misfortune to share a kettle. A love of all things saccharine often seems present where there is a lack of real warmth or charity.

So Dolores, who is one of the characters for whom I feel purest dislike, became an amalgam of traits taken from these, and a variety of sources. Her desire to control, to punish and to inflict pain, all in the name of law and order, are, I think, every bit as reprehensible as Lord Voldemort's unvarnished espousal of evil.

Umbridge's names were carefully chosen. 'Dolores' means sorrow, something she undoubtedly inflicts on all around her. 'Umbridge' is a play on 'umbrage' from the British expression 'to take umbrage', meaning offence. Dolores is offended by any challenge to her limited world-view; I felt her surname conveyed the pettiness and rigidity of her character. It is harder to explain 'Jane'; it simply felt rather smug and neat between her other two names.

Sybill Trelawney

Birthday 27th March

Wand Ash and unicorn hair, 9 1/2 inches long, very flexible

Home Trelawney house

Special abilities Some ability in Seeing, the gift is unpredictable and unconscious

Parentage Great-great-granddaughter of Cassandra Trelawney, mother, wizard father

Family Married Professor Firenze, marriage ended in unforeseen rupture when she refused to adopt the surname 'Higglebottom'. No children.

Hobbies Gazing into crystal balls, making doom-laden prophecies in front of the mirror, sherry

Sybill is the great-great granddaughter of a genuine Seer, Cassandra Trelawney. Cassandra's gift has been much diluted over ensuing generations, although Sybill has inherited more than she

knows. Half-believing in her own fibs about her talent (for she is at least ninety per cent fraud), Sybill has cultivated a dramatic manner and enjoys impressing her more gullible students with predictions of doom and disaster. She is gifted in the fortune teller's tricks; she accurately reads Neville's nervousness and suggestibility in his first class, and tells him he is about to break a cup, which he does. On other occasions, gullible students do her work for her. Professor Trelawney tells Lavender Brown that something she is dreading will happen to her on the sixteenth of October; when Lavender receives news on that day that her pet rabbit has died, she connects it instantly with the prediction. All of Hermione's logic and good sense (Lavender was not dreading the death of the rabbit, which was very young; the rabbit did not die on the sixteenth, but the previous day) are lost: Lavender wants to believe her unhappiness was foretold. By the law of averages, Professor Trelawney's rapid fire predictions sometimes hit the mark, but most of the time she is full of hot air and self-importance.

Nevertheless, Sybill does experience very rare flashes of genuine clairvoyance, which she can never remember afterwards. She secured her post at Hogwarts because she revealed, during her interview with Dumbledore, that she was the unconscious possessor of important knowledge. Dumbledore gave her sanctuary at the school, partly to protect her, partly in the hope that more genuine predictions would be forthcoming (he had to wait many years for the next).

Conscious of her low status on the staff, who are almost all more talented than she is, Sybill spends most of her time apart from her colleagues, up in her stuffy and overcrowded tower office. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, she has developed an over-reliance on alcohol.

Professors Trelawney and McGonagall are polar opposites; the one something of a charlatan, manipulative and grandiose, the other fiercely intelligent, stern and upright. I knew, however, that when the consummate outsider and non-Hogwartian Dolores Umbridge attempted to oust Sybill from the school, Minerva McGonagall, who has been critical of Trelawney on many occasions, would show the true kindness of her character and rally to her defence. There is a pathos about Professor Trelawney, infuriating though I would find her in real life, and I think that Minerva sensed her underlying feeling of inadequacy.

I created detailed histories for many of the Hogwarts staff (such as Albus Dumbledore, Minerva McGonagall and Rubeus Hagrid), some of which were used in the books, and some of which were not. It is in some ways fitting that I only ever had a vague idea of what had happened to the Divination teacher before she washed up at

Hogwarts. I imagine that Sybill's pre-Hogwarts existence consisted of drifting through the wizarding world, trying to trade on her ancestry to secure employment, but scorning any that did not offer what she feels is the status due to a Seer.

I love Cornish surnames, and had never used one until the third book in the series, so that is how Professor Trelawney got her family name. I did not want to call her anything comical, or which suggested chicanery, but something impressive and attractive. 'Trelawney' is a very old name, suggestive of Sybill's over-reliance on her ancestry when seeking to impress. There is a beautiful old Cornish song featuring the name ('The Song of the Western Men'). Sybill's first name is a homonym of 'Sibyl', which was a female clairvoyant in ancient times. My American editor wanted me to use 'Sibyl', but I preferred my version, because while it keeps the reference to the august clairvoyants of old, it is really no more than a variant the unfashionable female name 'Sybil'. Professor Trelawney, I felt, did not really qualify as a 'Sibyl'.

Naming seers

A very great variety of first names are given to children by their wizard parents, some of them being what we might think of as Muggle names (e.g. James, Harry, Ronald), others giving a distinct flavour of the personality or destiny of the bearer (e.g. Xenophilius, Remus, Alecto).

Some wizards have a family tradition of names. The Black family, for instance, like to name their offspring after stars and constellations (which many would say suits their lofty ambition and pride). Other wizarding families (like the Potters and the Weasleys) simply pick their favourite names for their children, and leave it at that.

A certain sector of magical society, however, follows the ancient wizarding practice of consulting a Naming Seer, who (usually for a hefty payment of gold) will predict the child's future and suggest an appropriate moniker.

This practice is becoming increasingly rare. Many parents prefer to 'let him/her find his/her own way', and dislike (with good reason) receiving premature hints of aptitude, limitations or, at worst, catastrophe. Mothers and fathers have often fretted themselves silly on the way home from the Naming Seer, wishing that they had not heard the Seer's predictions about their child's personality or future.

Azkaban

Azkaban has existed since the fifteenth century and was not originally a prison at all. The island in the North Sea upon which the first fortress was built never appeared on any map, Muggle or wizarding, and is believed to have been created, or enlarged, by magical means.

The fortress upon it was originally home to a little-known sorcerer who called himself Ekrizdis. Evidently extremely powerful, but of unknown nationality, Ekrizdis, who is believed to have been insane, was a practitioner of the worst kinds of Dark Arts. Alone in the middle of the ocean, he lured, tortured and killed Muggle sailors, apparently for pleasure, and only when he died, and the concealment charms he had cast faded away, did the Ministry of Magic realise that either island or building existed. Those who entered to investigate refused afterwards to talk of what they had found inside, but the least frightening part of it was that the place was infested with Dementors.

Many in authority thought Azkaban an evil place that was best destroyed. Others were afraid of what might happen to the Dementors infesting the building if they deprived them of their home. The creatures were already strong and impossible to kill; many feared a horrible revenge if they took away a habitat where they appeared to thrive. The very walls of the building seemed steeped in misery and pain, and the Dementors were determined to cling to it. Experts who had studied buildings built with and around Dark magic contended that Azkaban might wreak its own revenge upon anybody attempting to destroy it. The fortress was therefore left abandoned for many years, a home to continually breeding Dementors.

Once the International Statute of Secrecy had been imposed, the Ministry of Magic felt that the small wizarding prisons that existed up and down the country in various towns and villages posed a security risk, because attempts by incarcerated witches and wizards to break out often led to undesirable bangs, smells and light shows. A purpose-built prison, located on some remote Hebridean island, was preferred, and plans had been drawn up when Damocles Rowle became Minister for Magic.

Rowle was an authoritarian who had risen to power on an anti-Muggle agenda, capitalising on the anger felt by much of the wizarding community at being forced to go underground. Sadistic by nature, Rowle scrapped the plans for the new prison at once and insisted on using Azkaban. He claimed that the Dementors living there were an advantage: they could be harnessed as guards, saving the Ministry time, trouble and expense.

In spite of opposition from many wizards, among them experts on both Dementors and buildings with Azkaban's kind of Dark history, Rowle carried out his plan and soon a steady trickle of prisoners had been placed there. None ever emerged. If they were not mad and dangerous before being placed in Azkaban, they swiftly became so.

Rowle was succeeded by Perseus Parkinson, who was likewise pro-Azkaban. By the time that Eldritch Diggory took over as Minister for Magic, the prison had been operating for fifteen years. There had been no breakouts and no breaches of security. The new prison seemed to be working well. It was only when Diggory went to visit that he realised exactly what conditions inside were like. Prisoners were mostly insane and a graveyard had been established to accommodate those that died of despair.

Back in London, Diggory established a committee to explore alternatives to Azkaban, or at least to remove the Dementors as guards. Experts explained to him that the only reason the Dementors were (mostly) confined to the island was that they were being provided with a constant supply of souls on which to feed. If deprived of prisoners, they were likely to abandon the prison and head for the mainland.

This advice notwithstanding, Diggory had been so horrified by what he had seen inside Azkaban that he pressed the committee to find alternatives. Before they could reach any decision, however, Diggory caught dragon pox and died. From that time until the advent of Kingsley Shacklebolt, no Minister ever seriously considered closing Azkaban. They turned a blind eye to the inhumane conditions inside the fortress, permitted it to be magically enlarged and expanded and rarely visited, due to the awful effects of entering a building populated by thousands of Dementors. Most justified their attitude by pointing to the prison's perfect record at keeping prisoners locked up.

Nearly three centuries passed before that record was broken. A young man was successfully smuggled out of the prison when his visiting mother exchanged places with him, something that the blind and loveless Dementors could not detect and would have never expected. This escape was followed by another, still more ingenious and impressive, when Sirius Black managed to evade the Dementors single-handed.

The weakness of the prison was demonstrated amply over the next few years, when two mass breakouts occurred, both involving Death Eaters. By this time the Dementors had given their allegiance to Lord Voldemort, who could guarantee them scope and freedom hitherto untasted. Albus Dumbledore was one who had long disapproved of the use of Dementors as guards, not only because of the inhumane treatment of the prisoners in their power, but because he foresaw the

possible shift in loyalties of such Dark creatures.

Under Kingsley Shacklebolt, Azkaban was purged of Dementors. While it remains in use as a prison, the guards are now Aurors, who are regularly rotated from the mainland. There has been no breakout since this new system was introduced.

The name ‘Azkaban’ derives from a mixture of the prison ‘Alcatraz’, which is its closest Muggle equivalent, being set on an island, and ‘Abaddon’, which is a Hebrew word meaning ‘place of destruction’ or ‘depths of hell’.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince

Cokeworth

Cokeworth is a fictional town in the English midlands where Harry spends a night at the Railview Hotel with his aunt, uncle and cousin Dudley. Cokeworth's name is supposed to suggest an industrial town, and to evoke associations of hard work and grime.

Although it is never made explicit in the books, Cokeworth is the place where Petunia and Lily Evans and Severus Snape all grew up. When Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon are trying to evade the letters from Hogwarts, they travel to Cokeworth. Perhaps Uncle Vernon has a vague idea that Cokeworth is so distinctly unmagical, the letters will not follow them there. He ought to have known better; after all Petunia's sister, Lily, turned into a talented witch in Cokeworth.

It is therefore Cokeworth that Bellatrix and Narcissa visit at the start of Half-Blood Prince, where they visit Snape at his parents' old house. Cokeworth has a river running through it, evidence of at least one large factory in the long chimney overlooking Snape's house, and many small streets full of workers' houses.

Florean Fortescue

Florean Fortescue, owner of an ice-cream parlour in Diagon Alley, is the subject of a ghost plot (a narrative that never made it into the final books). Harry meets him in Prisoner of Azkaban, where he finds out that Florean knows a lot about medieval wizards. Later, Harry discovers that an ex-headmaster of Hogwarts was called Dexter Fortescue.

Florean is a descendant of Dexter, and I originally planned Florean to be the conduit for clues that I needed to give Harry during his quest for the Hallows, which is why I established an acquaintance fairly early on. At this stage, I imagined the historically-minded Florean might have a smattering of information on matters as diverse as the Elder Wand and the diadem of Ravenclaw, the information having been passed down in the Fortescue family from their august ancestor. As I worked my way nearer to the point where such information would become necessary, I caused Florean to be kidnapped, intending him to be found or rescued by Harry and his friends.

The problem was that when I came to write the key parts of Deathly Hallows I decided that Phineas Nigellus Black was a much more satisfactory means of conveying clues. Florean's information on

the diadem also felt redundant, as I could give the reader everything he or she needed by interviewing the Grey Lady. All in all, I seemed to have had him kidnapped and killed for no reason. He is not the first wizard whom Voldemort murdered because he knew too much (or too little), but he is the only one I feel guilty about, because it was all my fault.

The Leaky Cauldron

Some people argue that the oldest pub in London is the White Hart on Drury Lane; others that it is the Angel on Bermondsey Wall, or the Lamb and Flag on Rose Street. All of these people are Muggles, and all of them are wrong. The oldest pub London, as any wizard will tell you, is the Leaky Cauldron on Charing Cross Road.

The Leaky Cauldron was there long before Charing Cross Road was even planned; its true address is number one, Diagon Alley, and it is believed to have been built some time in the early 1500s, along with the rest of the wizarding street. Created some two centuries before the imposition of the International Statue of Secrecy, the leaky Cauldron was initially visible to Muggle eyes. While the pub was, from the first, a place for witches and wizards to congregate - whether Londoners or out-of-towners up for the day to shop for the latest magical ingredients or devices- Muggles were not turned away or made to feel unwelcome, even though some of the conversations, not to mention pets caused many an unwary drinker to leave without finishing his mead.

When the Statute of Secrecy was imposed, the Leaky Cauldron, great British wizarding institution that it had become, was granted special dispensation to continue its existence as a safe haven and refuge for wizardkind in the capital. Though insistent on many powerful spells of concealment, and good behaviour from all who used it, the Minister for Magic, Ulick Gamp, was sympathetic to the need of wizards to let off steam under the difficult new conditions. He further agreed to give the landlord of the day responsibility for letting people into Diagon Alley from his backyard, for the shops beyond the pub were now also in need of magical protection.

To honour Gamp's protection of the pub, the landlord created a new brand of beer, Gamp's Old Gregarious, which tasted so disgusting that nobody has ever been known to finish a pint (there is a one hundred Galleon prize to anyone prepared to do so, but nobody has yet succeeded in claiming the gold).

The Leaky Cauldron faced one of its most difficult challenges in the late nineteenth century, with the creation of Charing Cross Road, which ought to have flattened it completely. The Minister for Magic of the day, the tediously long-winded Faris Spavin, gave a melancholy speech in the Wizengamot explaining why the Leaky Cauldron could not, this time, be saved. When Spavin sat down seven hours later, having finished his speech, he was presented with a note from his secretary explaining that the wizarding community had rallied, performed a mass of Memory Charms (some say, to this day, that the Imperius Curse was used on several Muggle town planners, though this has never been proven) and that the Leaky Cauldron had been accommodated in the revised plans for the new road. Certainly, the Muggle architects involved never did understand why they had left a gap in their plans for buildings, nor why the gap was not visible to the naked eye.

The Leaky Cauldron had changed little over the years; it is small, dingy and welcoming, with a few bedrooms above the public bar for travellers who live a long way from London. It is the ideal spot to catch up with wizarding gossip if you happen to live a long way from the nearest magical neighbour.

Charing Cross Road is famous for its bookshops, both modern and antiquarian. This is why I wanted it to be the place where those in the know go to enter a different world.

Cauldrons

Cauldrons were once used by Muggles and wizards alike, being large metal cooking pots that could be suspended over fires. In time, magical and non-magical people alike moved on to stoves; saucepans became more convenient and cauldrons became the sole province of witches and wizards, who continued to brew potions in them. A naked flame is essential for the making of potions, which makes cauldrons the most practical pot of all.

All cauldrons are enchanted to make them lighter to carry, as they are most commonly made of pewter or iron. Modern inventions include the self-stirring and collapsible varieties of cauldron, and pots of precious metal are also available for the specialist, or the show-off.

Cauldrons have had a magical association for centuries. They appear in hundreds of years' worth of pictures of witches, and are also supposed to be where leprechauns keep treasure. Many folk and fairy tales make mention of cauldrons with special powers, but in the Harry Potter books they are a fairly mundane tool. I did consider making

Helga Hufflepuff's hallow a cauldron, but there was something slightly comical and incongruous about having such a large and heavy Horcrux; I wanted the objects Harry had to find to be smaller and more portable. However, a cauldron appears both in the four mythical jewels of Ireland (its magical power was that nobody ever went away from it unsatisfied) and in the legend of The Thirteen Treasures of Britain (the cauldron of Dyrnwch the giant would cook meat for brave men, but not for cowards).

Potions

It is often asked whether a Muggle could create a magic potion, given a Potions book and the right ingredients. The answer, unfortunately, is no. There is always some element of wandwork necessary to make a potion (merely adding dead flies and asphodel to a pot hanging over a fire will give you nothing but nasty-tasting, not to mention poisonous, soup).

Some potions duplicate the effects of spells and charms, but a few (for instance, the Polyjuice Potion, and Felix Felicis) have effects impossible to achieve any other way. Generally speaking, witches and wizards favour whichever method they find easiest, or most satisfying, to produce their chosen end.

Potions are not for the impatient, but their effects are usually difficult to undo by any but another skilled potioneer. This branch of magic carries a certain mystique and therefore status. There is also the dark cachet of handling substances that are highly dangerous. The popular idea of a Potions expert within the wizarding community is of a brooding, slow-burning personality: Snape, in fact, conforms perfectly to the stereotype.

Chemistry was my least favourite subject at school, and I gave it up as soon as I could. Naturally, when I was trying to decide which subject Harry's arch-enemy, Severus Snape, should teach, it had to be the wizarding equivalent. This makes it all the stranger that I found Snape's introduction to his subject quite compelling ('I can teach you to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death…'), apparently part of me found Potions quite as interesting as Snape did; and indeed I always enjoyed creating potions in the books, and researching ingredients for them. Many of the components of the various draughts and libations that Harry creates for Snape exist (or were once believed to exist) and have (or were believed to have) the properties I gave them. Dittany, for instance, really does have healing properties (it is an anti-inflammatory, although I would not advise Splinching yourself

to test it); a bezoar really is a mass taken from the intestines of an animal, and it really was once believed that drinking water in which a bezoar was placed could cure you of poisoning.

Vampires

Although vampires exist in the world of Harry Potter, as shown by the literature that Harry and his friends study in Defence Against the Dark Arts, they play no meaningful part in the story. The vampire myth is so rich, and has been exploited so many times in literature and on film, that I felt there was little I could add to the tradition. In any case, vampires are a tradition of Eastern Europe, and in general I tried to draw from British mythology and folklore when creating adversaries for Harry. Aside from passing mentions, therefore, the only vampire whom Harry meets in the books is Sanguini in Half-Blood Prince, who makes a faintly comic appearance at a party. Looking back through my earliest notebooks, however, I found that on my very earliest list of staff, there was a subjectless vampire teacher I had forgotten, called 'Trocar'. A Trocar is sharply pointed shaft inserted into arteries or cavities to extract bodily fluids, so I think it a rather good name for a vampire. Evidently I did not think much of him as a character, though, because he disappears fairly early on in my notes.

For a long time there was a persistent fan rumour that Snape might be a vampire. While it is true that he has an unhealthy pallor, and is sometimes described as looking like a large bat in his long black cloak, he never actually turns into a bat, we meet him outside the castle by daylight, and no corpses with puncture marks in their necks ever turn up at Hogwarts. In short, Snape is not a re-vamped Trocar.

Inferi

An Inferius (plural: Inferi) is a corpse that has been reanimated by a Dark wizard's curse. It becomes a grisly puppet, and may be used as an expendable servant by the Dark wizard in question. The most obvious sign that one is facing an Inferius rather than a living human are the white and cloudy eyes. The spells used to reanimate a human body are much more complex than those used, for instance, to make inanimate objects fly. The Inferius may be cursed to respond lethally if disturbed, to kill indiscriminately, and to undertake perilous jobs for

its master. Its limitations are, however, obvious; it has no will and no brain of its own, and will not be able to think its way out of unforeseen trouble. As a warrior or guardian with no regard for its own safety, however, it has many uses.

The Inferi whom Harry and Dumbledore encounter in the depths of the lake in Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince were, when alive, mostly vagrant, homeless Muggles whom Voldemort had murdered for the purpose during his first rise to power, although some were the earthly remains of wizards or witches who 'disappeared' without explanation.

Preserved indefinitely by Dark magic, an Inferius can only be destroyed by fire, for no spell has been found to render dead flesh impervious to burning. Inferi are therefore enchanted to avoid flames by their master.

Inferi have much in common with zombies, which are mentioned as separate creatures within Harry's world. I had several good reasons for not wishing to call the guardians of the locket Horcrux 'zombies'. Firstly, zombies are not part of British folklore, but associated with the myths of Haiti and parts of Africa. While the students of Hogwarts would learn about them, they would not expect to meet them walking down the streets of Hogsmeade. Secondly, while zombies of the Vodou tradition can be nothing more than reanimated corpses, a separate but related tradition has it that the sorcerer uses their souls, or part of their souls, to sustain himself. This conflicted with my Horcrux story, and I did not wish to suggest that Voldemort had any more use for his Inferi than as guards of his Horcrux. Lastly, zombies have been represented and reinterpreted on film so often in the last fifty years that they have a whole raft of associations that were of no use to me. I'm part of the 'Thriller' generation; to me, a zombie will always mean Michael Jackson in a bright red bomber jacket.

The name Inferius was a play on 'Inferus', which is Latin for 'below', but with an obvious connotation of being 'lesser' than a living human. 'Inferi' means the underworld.

Order of Merlin

The Order of Merlin (sometimes abbreviated to O.M.) is awarded by the Wizengamot, an organisation that predates the Ministry of Magic and nowadays functions as a combination of court and parliament. The Order comprises a handsome golden medal on a green ribbon (First Class), purple ribbon (Second Class) or white ribbon (Third Class).

The Order of Merlin, commemorating the most famous wizard of his time, has been given since the fifteenth century. Legend says that the green ribbon, on which the First Class Order hangs, is to reflect Merlin's Hogwarts house.

The First Class Order is awarded 'for acts of outstanding bravery or distinction' in magic, the Second Class is awarded for 'achievement or endeavour beyond the ordinary' and the Third Class is given to those who 'have made a contribution to our store of knowledge or entertainment.'

As often happens with such highly coveted awards, Ministry of Magic favourites seem to receive the Order of Merlin, especially the higher classes, more often than one might expect. While nobody argued when Albus Dumbledore received his O.M. (First Class) for defeating the Dark wizard Grindelwald, there was a good deal of muttering in the wizarding community when Cornelius Fudge, Minister for Magic, awarded himself an O.M. (First Class) for a career that many considered less than distinguished. Other less worthy recipients of the highest class of order include Arcturus Black, Sirius Black's grandfather, who was widely believed to have bought it by loaning the Ministry a large amount of gold.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

Extension Charms

Hogwarts school trunks, like the majority of wizarding luggage, are issued with capacity enhancing or extension charms as standard. These spells not only increase the interior dimensions of objects, while leaving the outer ones unchanged, they also render the contents lighter.

The Extension Charm ('Capacious extremis!') is advanced, but subject to strict control, because of its potential misuse. Theoretically, a hundred wizards could take up residence in a toilet cubicle if they were sufficiently adept at these spells; the potential for infractions of the International Statute of Secrecy are obvious. The Ministry of Magic has therefore laid down a strict rule that capacity-enhancement is not for private use, but only for the production of objects (such as school trunks and family tents), which have been individually approved for manufacture by the relevant Ministry Department. Both Mr Weasley and Hermione Granger were acting unlawfully when they enhanced, respectively, the interior space of a Ford Anglia, and a small handbag. The former is now believed to be living wild in the Forbidden Forest at Hogwarts, and as the latter played no insignificant part in the defeat of the greatest Dark wizard of all time, no charges have been brought.

Alchemy

Alchemy (the search for the Philosopher's Stone, which would turn base metal to gold and give the possessor eternal youth) was once believed to be possible and real. However, the central quest of alchemy may be more complex, and less materialistic, than it first appears.

One interpretation of the 'instructions' left by the alchemists is that they are symbolic of a spiritual journey, leading the alchemist from ignorance (base metal) to enlightenment (gold). There seems to have been a mystical element to the work the alchemist was engaged upon, which set it apart from chemistry (of which it was undoubtedly both an offshoot and forerunner).

The colours red and white are mentioned many times in old texts on alchemy. One interpretation is that they, like base metal and gold, represent two different sides of human nature, which must be reconciled. This was the inspiration for the Christian names of Rubeus

(red) Hagrid and Albus (white) Dumbledore. These two men, both hugely important to Harry, seem to me to represent two sides of the ideal father figure he seeks; the former is warm, practical and wild, the latter impressive, intellectual, and somewhat detached.

Although there are books on alchemy in the library at Hogwarts, and I always imagined that it would be studied by very clever students in their sixth and seven years, Hermione most uncharacteristically ignores the opportunity. Perhaps she feels (as Harry and Ron certainly do) that, far from wishing to make another Philosopher's Stone, they would be happy never to see another one in their lives.

Hufflepuff Common Room

The Hufflepuff common room is entered from the same corridor as the Hogwarts kitchens. Proceeding past the large still life that forms the entrance to the latter, a pile of large barrels is to be found stacked in a shadowy stone recess on the right-hand side of the corridor. The barrel two from the bottom, middle of the second row, will open if tapped in the rhythm of 'Helga Hufflepuff'.* As a security device to repel non-Hufflepuffs, tapping on the wrong barrel, or tapping the incorrect number of times, results in one of the other lids bursting off and drenching the interloper in vinegar.

A sloping, earthy passage inside the barrel travels upwards a little way until a cosy, round, low-ceilinged room is revealed, reminiscent of a badger's set. The room is decorated in the cheerful, bee-like colours of yellow and black, emphasised by the use of highly polished, honey-coloured wood for the tables and the round doors which lead to the boys' and girls' dormitories (furnished with comfortable wooden bedsteads, all covered in patchwork quilts).

A colourful profusion of plants and flowers seem to relish the atmosphere of the Hufflepuff common room: various cactii stand on wooden circular shelves (curved to fit the walls), many of them waving and dancing at passers-by, while copper-bottomed plant holders dangling amid the ceiling cause tendrils of ferns and ivies to brush your hair as you pass under them.

A portrait over the wooden mantelpiece (carved all over with decorative dancing badgers) shows Helga Hufflepuff, one of the four founders of Hogwarts School, toasting her students with a tiny, two-handled golden cup. Small, round windows just level with the ground at the foot of the castle show a pleasant view of rippling grass and dandelions, and, occasionally, passing feet. These low windows notwithstanding, the room feels perennially sunny.

*The complexity or otherwise of the entrance to the common rooms might be said to give a very rough idea of the intellectual reputation of each house: Hufflepuff has an unchanging portal and requires rhythmic tapping; Slytherin and Gryffindor have doorways that challenge the would-be entrant about equally, the former having an almost imperceptible hidden entrance and a varying password, the latter having a capricious guardian and frequently changing passwords. In keeping with its reputation as the house of the most agile minds at Hogwarts, the door to the Ravenclaw common room presents a fresh intellectual or philosophical challenge every time a person knocks on it.

Nevertheless, it ought not to be concluded from the above that Hufflepuffs are dimwits or duffers, though they have been cruelly caricatured that way on occasion. Several outstanding brains have emerged from Hufflepuff house over the centuries; these fine minds simply happened to be allied to outstanding qualities of patience, a strong work ethic and constancy, all traditional hallmarks of Hufflepuff House.

When I first planned the series, I expected Harry to visit all four house common rooms during his time at Hogwarts. There came a point when I realised that there was never going to be a valid reason to enter the Hufflepuff room. Nevertheless, it is quite as real to me as the other three, and I always knew exactly where those Hufflepuffs were going when they headed off towards the kitchens after lessons.

The Potter Family

The Potter family is a very old one, but it was never (until the birth of Harry James Potter) at the very forefront of wizarding history, contenting itself with a solid and comfortable existence in the backwaters.

Potter is a not uncommon Muggle surname, and the family did not make the so-called ‘Sacred Twenty-Eight’ for this reason; the anonymous compiler of that supposedly definitive list of pure-bloods suspected that they had sprung from what he considered to be tainted blood. The wizarding Potter family had illustrious beginnings, however, some of which was hinted at in Deathly Hallows.

In the Muggle world ‘Potter’ is an occupational surname, meaning a man who creates pottery. The wizarding family of Potters descends from the twelfth-century wizard Linfred of Stinchcombe, a locally well-beloved and eccentric man, whose nickname, ‘the Potterer’, became corrupted in time to ‘Potter’. Linfred was a vague and absent-

minded fellow whose Muggle neighbours often called upon his medicinal services. None of them realised that Linfred's wonderful cures for pox and ague were magical; they all thought him a harmless and lovable old chap, pottering about in his garden with all his funny plants. His reputation as a well-meaning eccentric served Linfred well, for behind closed doors he was able to continue the series of experiments that laid the foundation of the Potter family's fortune. Historians credit Linfred as the originator of a number of remedies that evolved into potions still used to this day, including Skele-gro and Pepperup Potion. His sales of such cures to fellow witches and wizards enabled him to leave a significant pile of gold to each of his seven children upon his death.

Linfred's eldest son, Hardwin, married a beautiful young witch by the name of Iolanthe Peverell, who came from the village of Godric's Hollow. She was the granddaughter of Ignotus Peverell. In the absence of male heirs, she, the eldest of her generation, had inherited her grandfather's invisibility cloak. It was, Iolanthe explained to Hardwin, a tradition in her family that the possession of this cloak remained a secret, and her new husband respected her wishes. From this time on, the cloak was handed down to the eldest in each new generation.

The Potters continued to marry their neighbours, occasionally Muggles, and to live in the West of England, for several generations, each one adding to the family coffers by their hard work and, it must be said, by the quiet brand of ingenuity that had characterised their forebear, Linfred.

Occasionally, a Potter made it all the way to London, and a member of the family has twice sat on the Wizengamot: Ralston Potter, who was a member from 1612-1652, and who was a great supporter of the Statute of Secrecy (as opposed to declaring war on the Muggles, as more militant members wished to do) and Henry Potter (Harry to his intimates), who was a direct descendant of Hardwin and Iolanthe, and served on the Wizengamot from 1913 - 1921. Henry caused a minor stir when he publicly condemned then Minister for Magic, Archer Evermonde, who had forbidden the magical community to help Muggles waging the First World War. His outspokenness on the behalf of the Muggle community was also a strong contributing factor in the family's exclusion from the 'Sacred Twenty-Eight'.

Henry's son was called Fleamont Potter. Fleamont was so called because it was the dying wish of Henry's mother that he perpetuates her maiden name, which would otherwise die out. He bore the burden remarkably well; indeed, he always attributed his dexterity at duelling to the number of times he had to fight people at Hogwarts after they had made fun of his name. It was Fleamont who took the family gold

and quadrupled it, by creating magical Sleekeazy's Hair Potion ('two drops tames even the most bothersome barnet'). He sold the company at a vast profit when he retired, but no amount of riches could compensate him or his wife Euphemia for their childlessness. They had quite given up hope of a son or daughter when, to their shock and surprise, Euphemia found that she was pregnant and their beloved boy, James, was born.

Fleamont and Euphemia lived long enough to see James marry a Muggle-born girl called Lily Evans, but not to meet their grandson, Harry. Dragon pox carried them off within days of each other, due to their advanced age, and James Potter then inherited Ignotus Peverell's Invisibility Cloak.

Familiars

The concept of 'familiars' has existed in British folklore for many hundreds of years. Familiars are animals (some say animal-shaped spirits) that serve a witch in various ways, whether as servants, messengers or even spies. Historical accounts of witchcraft make mention of familiars; such animals have been credited with supernatural gifts, and even believed to be demons (or the devil himself) in disguise.

Familiars, in the strictest sense, do not exist within the world of Harry Potter. Although Hogwarts students are permitted to bring animals to school with them, the cats and rats we see there are, broadly speaking, pets. Ironically, the animal that acts most like a traditional familiar in the entire series is Mrs Norris, who belongs to the castle's only non-magical inhabitant, Argus Filch. It is true that owls are sent as messengers within the series, but this is in the context of a highly organised postal service, not unlike Muggle pigeon post.

The Quill of Acceptance and The Book of Admittance

In a small locked tower, never visited by any student at Hogwarts, sits an ancient book that has not been touched by human hands since the four founders placed it there on completion of the castle. Beside the book, which is bound in peeling black dragon-hide, stands a small silver inkpot and from this protrudes a long, faded quill. These are the Quill of Acceptance and the Book of Admittance and they constitute the only process by which students are selected for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

If anybody understands what powerful and long-lasting magic causes this book and quill to behave as they do, nobody has ever confessed to it, doubtless because (as Albus Dumbledore once sighed) it saves the staff tedious explanations to parents who are furious that their children have not been selected for Hogwarts. The Book and Quill's decision is final and no child has ever been admitted whose name has not first been inscribed on the book's yellowing pages.

At the precise moment that a child first exhibits signs of magic, the Quill, which is believed to have been taken from an Augurey, floats up out of its inkpot and attempts to inscribe the name of that child upon the pages of the Book (Augurey feathers are known to repel ink and the inkpot is empty; nobody has ever managed to analyse precisely what the silvery fluid flowing from the enchanted Quill is).

Those few who have observed the process (several headmasters and headmistresses have enjoyed spending quiet hours in the Book and Quill's tower, hoping to catch them in action) agree that the Quill might be judged more lenient than the Book. A mere whiff of magic suffices for the Quill. The Book, however, will often snap shut, refusing to be written upon until it receives sufficiently dramatic evidence of magical ability.

Thus, the very moment that Neville Longbottom was born, the Quill attempted to write his name and was refused by the Book, which snapped shut. Even the midwife who attended Alice Longbottom had failed to notice that Neville managed to shift his blankets more snugly over himself moments after birth, assuming that his father had tucked the baby in more securely. Neville's family persistently missed faint signs of magic in him and not until he was eight years old did either his disappointed great aunts and uncles, or the old stickler of a Book, accept that he was truly a wizard, when he survived a fall that should

have killed him.

In fact, the Book's sternness has a purpose: its track record in keeping Squibs out of Hogwarts is perfect. Non-magic children born to witches and wizards occasionally have some small, residual aura of magic about them due to their parents, but once their parents' magic has worn off them it becomes clear that they will never have the ability to perform spells. The Quill's sensitivity, coupled with the Book's implacability, have never yet made a mistake.

Common Room Welcome Messages

Gryffindor

"Congratulations! I'm Prefect Percy Weasley, and I'm delighted to welcome you to GRYFFINDOR HOUSE. Our emblem is the lion, the bravest of all creatures; our house colours are scarlet and gold, and our common room lies up in Gryffindor Tower.

This is, quite simply, the best house at Hogwarts. It's where the bravest and boldest end up – for instance: Albus Dumbledore! Yes, Dumbledore himself, the greatest wizard of our time, was a Gryffindor! If that's not enough for you, I don't know what it is.

I won't keep you long, as all you need to do to find out more about your house is to follow Harry Potter and his friends as I lead them up to their dormitories. Enjoy your time at Hogwarts – but how could you fail to? You've become part of the best house in the school."

Ravenclaw

"Congratulations! I'm Prefect Robert Hilliard, and I'm delighted to welcome you to RAVENCLAW HOUSE. Our emblem is the eagle, which soars where others cannot climb; our house colors are blue and bronze, and our common room is found at the top of Ravenclaw Tower, behind a door with an enchanted knocker. The arched windows set into the walls of our circular common room look down at the school grounds: the lake, the Forbidden Forest, the Quidditch pitch and the Herbology gardens. No other house in the school has such stunning views.

Without wishing to boast, this is the house where the cleverest witches and wizards live. Our founder, Rowena Ravenclaw, prized learning above all else – and so do we. Unlike the other houses, who all have concealed entrances to their common rooms, we don't need one. The door to our common room lies at the top of a tall, winding staircase. It has no handle, but an enchanted bronze knocker in the shape of an eagle. When you rap on the door, this knocker will ask you a question, and if you can answer it correctly, you are allowed in. This simple barrier has kept out everyone but Ravenclaws for nearly a thousand years.

Some first-years are scared by having to answer the eagle's questions, but don't worry. Ravenclaws learn quickly, and you'll soon enjoy the challenges the door sets. It's not unusual to find twenty people standing outside the common room door, all trying to work out the answer to the day's question together. This is a great way to meet fellow Ravenclaws from other years, and to learn from them – although it is a bit annoying if you've forgotten your Quidditch robes and need to get in and out in a

hurry. In fact, I'd advise you to triple-check your bag for everything you need before leaving Ravenclaw Tower.

Another cool thing about Ravenclaw is that our people are the most individual – some might even call them eccentrics. But geniuses are often out of step with ordinary folk, and unlike some other houses we could mention, we think you've got the right to wear what you like, believe what you want, and say what you feel. We aren't put off by people who march to a different tune; on the contrary, we value them!

Speaking of eccentrics, you'll like our Head of house, Professor Filius Flitwick. People often underestimate him, because he's really tiny (we think he's part elf, but we've never been rude enough to ask) and he's got a squeaky voice, but he's the best and most knowledgeable Charms master alive in the world today. His office door is always open to any Ravenclaw with a problem, and if you're in a real state he'll get out these delicious little cupcakes he keeps in a tin in his desk drawer and make them do a little dance for you. In fact, it's worth pretending you're in a real state just to see them jive.

Ravenclaw house has an illustrious history. Most of the greatest wizarding inventors and innovators were in our house, including Perpetua Fancourt, the inventor of the lunascope, Laverne de Montmorency, a great pioneer of love potions, and Ignatia Wildsmith, the inventor of Floo powder. Famous Ravenclaw Ministers for Magic include Millicent Bagnold, who was in power on the night that Harry Potter survived the Dark Lord's curse, and defended the wizarding celebrations all over Britain with the words, 'I assert our inalienable right to party. There was also Minister Lorcan McLaird, who was a quite brilliant wizard, but preferred to communicate by puffing smoke out of the end of his wand. Well, I did say we produce eccentrics. In fact, we are also the house that gave the wizarding world Uric the Oddball, who used a jellyfish for a hat. He's the punch line of a lot of wizarding jokes.

As for our relationship with the other three houses: well, you've probably heard about the Slytherins. They're not all bad, but you'd do well to be on your guard until you know them well. They've got a long house tradition of doing whatever it takes to win – so watch out, especially in Quidditch matches and exams.

The Gryffindors are OK. If I had a criticism, I'd say Gryffindors tend to be show-offs. They're also much less tolerant than we are of people who are different; in fact, they've been known to make jokes about Ravenclaws who have developed an interest in levitation, or the possible magical uses of troll bogies, or ovomancy, which (as you probably know) is a method of divination using eggs. Gryffindors haven't got our intellectual curiosity, whereas we've got no problem if you want to spend your days and nights cracking eggs in a corner of the common room and writing down your predictions according to the way the yolks fall. In fact, you'll probably find a few people to help you.

As for the Hufflepuffs, well, nobody could say they're not nice people. In fact, they're some of the nicest people in the school. Let's just say you needn't worry too much about them when it comes to competition at exam time.

I think that's nearly everything. Oh yes, our house ghost is the Gray Lady. The rest of the school thinks she never speaks, but she'll talk to Ravenclaws. She's particularly useful if you're lost, or you've mislaid something.

I'm sure you'll have a good night. Our dormitories are in turrets off the main tower; our four-poster beds are covered in sky blue silk eiderdowns and the sound of the wind whistling around the windows is very relaxing.

And once again: well done on becoming a member of the cleverest, quirkiest and most interesting house at Hogwarts."

Hufflepuff

"Congratulations! I'm Prefect Gabriel Truman, and I'm delighted to welcome you to HUFFLEPUFF HOUSE. Our emblem is the badger, an animal that is often underestimated, because it lives quietly until attacked, but which, when provoked, can fight off animals much larger than itself, including wolves. Our house colours are yellow and black, and our common room lies one floor below the ground, on the same corridor as the kitchens. Now, there are a few things you should know about Hufflepuff house. First of all, let's deal with a perennial myth about the place, which is that we're the least clever house. WRONG. Hufflepuff is certainly the least boastful house, but we've produced just as many brilliant witches and wizards as any other. Want proof? Look up Grogan Stump, one of the most popular Ministers for Magic of all time. He was a Hufflepuff – as were the successful Ministers Artemesia Lufkin and Dugald McPhail. Then there's the world authority on magical creatures, Newt Scamander; Bridget Wenlock, the famous thirteenth-century Arithmancer who first discovered the magical properties of the number seven, and Hengist of Woodcroft, who founded the all-wizarding village of Hogsmeade, which lies very near Hogwarts School. Hufflepuffs all.

So, as you can see, we've produced more than our fair share of powerful, brilliant and daring witches and wizards, but, just because we don't shout about it, we don't get the credit we deserve. Ravenclaws, in particular, assume that any outstanding achiever must have come from their house. I got into big trouble during my third year for duelling a Ravenclaw prefect who insisted that Bridget Wenlock had come from his house, not mine. I should have got a week of detentions, but Professor Sprout let me off with a warning and a box of coconut ice.

Hufflepuffs are trustworthy and loyal. We don't shoot our mouths off, but cross us at your peril; like our emblem, the badger, we will protect ourselves, our friends and our families against all-comers. Nobody intimidates us.

However, it's true that Hufflepuff is a bit lacking in one area. We've produced the fewest Dark wizards of any house in this school. Of course, you'd expect Slytherin to churn out evil-doers, seeing as they've never heard of fair play and prefer cheating over hard work any day, but even Gryffindor (the house we get on best with) has produced a few dodgy characters.

What else do you need to know? Oh yes, the entrance to the common room is concealed in a stack of large barrels in a nook on the right hand side of the kitchen corridor. Tap the barrel two from the bottom, middle of the second row, in the rhythm of 'Helga Hufflepuff', and the lid will swing open. We are the only house at Hogwarts that also has a repelling device for would-be intruders. If the wrong lid is tapped, or if the rhythm of the tapping is wrong, the illegal entrant is doused in vinegar.

You will hear other houses boast of their security arrangements, but it so happens that in more than a thousand years, the Hufflepuff common room and dormitories have never been seen by outsiders. Like badgers, we know exactly how to lie low – and how to defend ourselves.

Once you've opened the barrel, crawl inside and along the passageway behind it, and you will emerge into the cosiest common room of them all. It is round and earthy and low-ceilinged; it always feels sunny, and its circular windows have a view of rippling grass and dandelions.

There is a lot of burnished copper about the place, and many plants, which either hang from the ceiling or sit on the windowsills. Our Head of house, Professor Pomona Sprout, is Head of Herbology, and she brings the most interesting specimens (some of which dance and talk) to decorate our room – one reason why Hufflepuffs are often

very good at Herbology. Our overstuffed sofas and chairs are upholstered in yellow and black, and our dormitories are reached through round doors in the walls of the common room. Copper lamps cast a warm light over our four-posters, all of which are covered in patchwork quilts, and copper bed warmers hang on the walls, should you have cold feet.

Our house ghost is the friendliest of them all: the Fat Friar. You'll recognise him easily enough; he's plump and wears monk's robes, and he's very helpful if you get lost or are in any kind of trouble.

I think that's nearly everything. I must say, I hope some of you are good Quidditch players. Hufflepuff hasn't done as well as I'd like in the Quidditch tournament lately.

You should sleep comfortably. We're protected from storms and wind down in our dormitories; we never have the disturbed nights those in the towers sometimes experience.

And once again: congratulations on becoming a member of the friendliest, most decent and most tenacious house of them all."

Slytherin

"Congratulations! I'm Prefect Gemma Farley, and I'm delighted to welcome you to SLYTHERIN HOUSE. Our emblem is the serpent, the wisest of creatures; our house colours are emerald green and silver, and our common room lies behind a concealed entrance down in the dungeons. As you'll see, its windows look out into the depths of the Hogwarts lake. We often see the giant squid swooshing by – and sometimes more interesting creatures. We like to feel that our hangout has the aura of a mysterious, underwater shipwreck.

Now, there are a few things you should know about Slytherin – and a few you should forget.

Firstly, let's dispel a few myths. You might have heard rumours about Slytherin house – that we're all into the Dark Arts, and will only talk to you if your great-grandfather was a famous wizard, and rubbish like that. Well, you don't want to believe everything you hear from competing houses. I'm not denying that we've produced our share of Dark wizards, but so have the other three houses – they just don't like admitting it. And yes, we have traditionally tended to take students who come from long lines of witches and wizards, but nowadays you'll find plenty of people in Slytherin house who have at least one Muggle parent.

Here's a little-known fact that the other three houses don't bring up much: Merlin was a Slytherin. Yes, Merlin himself, the most famous wizard in history! He learned all he knew in this very house! Do you want to follow in the footsteps of Merlin? Or would you rather sit at the old desk of that illustrious ex-Hufflepuff, Eglantine Puffett, inventor of the Self-Soaping Dishcloth?

I didn't think so.

But that's enough about what we're not. Let's talk about what we are, which is the coolest and edgiest house in this school. We play to win, because we care about the honour and traditions of Slytherin.

We also get respect from our fellow students. Yes, some of that respect might be tinged with fear, because of our Dark reputation, but you know what? It can be fun, having a reputation for walking on the wild side. Chuck out a few hints that you've got access to a whole library of curses, and see whether anyone feels like nicking your pencil case.

But we're not bad people. We're like our emblem, the snake: sleek, powerful, and frequently misunderstood.

For instance, we Slytherins look after our own – which is more than you can say for Ravenclaw. Apart from being the biggest bunch of swots you ever met, Ravenclaws are famous for clambering over each other to get good marks, whereas we Slytherins are brothers. The corridors of Hogwarts can throw up surprises for the unwary, and you'll be glad you've got the Serpents on your side as you move around the school. As far as we're concerned, once you've become a snake, you're one of ours – one of the elite.

Because you know what Salazar Slytherin looked for in his chosen students? The seeds of greatness. You've been chosen by this house because you've got the potential to be great, in the true sense of the word. All right, you might see a couple of people hanging around the common room whom you might not think are destined for anything special. Well, keep that to yourself. If the Sorting Hat put them in here, there's something great about them, and don't you forget it.

And talking of people who aren't destined for greatness, I haven't mentioned the Gryffindors. Now, a lot of people say that Slytherins and Gryffindors represent two sides of the same coin. Personally, I think Gryffindors are nothing more than wannabe Slytherins. Mind you, some people say that Salazar Slytherin and Godric Gryffindor prized the same kinds of students, so perhaps we are more similar than we like to think. But that doesn't mean that we cosy up with Gryffindors. They like beating us only slightly less than we like beating them.

A few more things you might need to know: our house ghost is the Bloody Baron. If you get on the right side of him he'll sometimes agree to frighten people for you. Just don't ask him how he got bloodstained; he doesn't like it.

The password to the common room changes every fortnight. Keep an eye on the noticeboard. Never bring anyone from another house into our common room or tell them our password. No outsider has entered it for more than seven centuries.

Well, I think that's all for now. I'm sure you'll like our dormitories. We sleep in ancient four-posters with green silk hangings, and bedspreads embroidered with silver thread. Medieval tapestries depicting the adventures of famous Slytherins cover the walls, and silver lanterns hang from the ceilings. You'll sleep well; it's very soothing, listening to the lake water lapping against the windows at night."

Wizarding Schools

The number of countries that have their own magical school is minuscule compared to those that do not. This is because the wizarding populations of most countries choose the option of home schooling. Occasionally, too, the magical community in a given country is tiny or far-flung and correspondence courses have been found a more cost-effective means of educating the young.

There are eleven long-established and prestigious wizarding schools worldwide, all of which are registered with the International Confederation of Wizards. Smaller and less well-regulated institutions have come and gone, are difficult to keep track of, and are rarely registered with the appropriate Ministry (in which case, I cannot vouch for the standard of education they might offer). Anyone wishing

to know whether there is an approved magical school in their region should address an owl enquiry to the International Confederation of Wizards, Educational Office.

The precise location of each of the following schools is a closely guarded secret. The schools fear not only Muggle persecution, for it is a sad fact that at various times in their long histories, all of these institutions have been buffeted by the effects of wizard wars, and of hostile attention from both the foreign and domestic magical communities (it is not only in Britain that the education of magical youth has been subject to Ministry interference or pressure). As a general rule, magical schools tend to be situated in landlocked, mountainous areas (although there are notable exceptions, as will be seen), as such regions are difficult for Muggles to access, and easier to defend from Dark wizards.

Mahoutokoro

This ancient Japanese school has the smallest student body of the eleven great wizarding schools and takes students from the age of seven (although they do not board until they are eleven). While day students, wizarding children are flown back and forth to their homes every day on the backs of a flock of giant storm petrels. The ornate and exquisite palace of Mahoutokoro is made of mutton-fat jade, and stands on the topmost point of the 'uninhabited' (or so Muggles think) Volcanic island of Minami Iwo Jima.

Students are presented with enchanted robes when they arrive, which grow in size as they do, and which gradually change colour as the learning of their wearer increases, beginning a faint pink colour and becoming (if top grades are achieved in every magical subject) gold. If the robes turn white, this is an indication that the student has betrayed the Japanese wizard's code and adopted illegal practices (which in Europe we call 'Dark' magic) or broken the International Statute of Secrecy. To 'turn white' is a terrible disgrace, which results in instant expulsion from the school and trial at the Japanese Ministry for Magic. Mahoutokoro's reputation rests not only on its impressive academic prowess, but also on its outstanding reputation for Quidditch, which, legend has it, was introduced to Japan centuries ago by a band of foolhardy Hogwarts students who were blown off course during an attempt to circumnavigate the globe on wholly inadequate broomsticks. Rescued by a party of wizarding staff from Mahoutokoro, who had been observing the movements of the planets, they remained as guests long enough to teach their Japanese counterparts the rudiments of the game, a move they lived to regret. Every member of the Japanese Quidditch team and the current

Champion's League winners (the Toyohashi Tengu) attributes their prowess to the gruelling training they were given at Mahoutokoro, where they practise over a sometimes turbulent sea in stormy conditions, forced to keep an eye out not only for the Bludgers but also for planes from the Muggle airbase on a neighbouring island.

Uagadou

Although Africa has a number of smaller wizarding schools (for advice on locating these, see introductory paragraph), there is only one that has stood the test of time (at least a thousand years) and achieved an enviable international reputation: Uagadou. The largest of all wizarding schools, it welcomes students from all over the enormous continent. The only address ever given is 'Mountains of the Moon'; visitors speak of a stunning edifice carved out of the mountainside and shrouded in mist, so that it sometimes appears simply to float in mid-air. Much (some would say all) magic originated in Africa, and Uagadou graduates are especially well versed in Astronomy, Alchemy and Self-Transfiguration.

The wand is a European invention, and while African witches and wizards have adopted it as a useful tool in the last century, many spells are cast simply by pointing the finger or through hand gestures. This gives Uagadou students a sturdy line of defence when accused of breaking the International Statute of Secrecy ('I was only waving, I never meant his chin to fall off'). At a recent International Symposium of Animagi, the Uagadou School Team attracted a lot of press when their exhibition of synchronised transforming caused a near riot. Many older and more experienced witches and wizards felt threatened by fourteen-year-olds who could turn at will into elephants and cheetahs, and a formal complaint was lodged with the International Confederation of Wizards by Adrian Tutley (Animagus: gerbil). The long list of celebrated ex-students produced by Uagadou includes Babajide Akingbade, who succeeded Albus Dumbledore as the Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards.

Students receive notice that they have gained entrance at Uagadou from Dream Messengers, sent by the headmaster or headmistress of the day. The Dream Messenger will appear to the children as they sleep and will leave a token, usually an inscribed stone, which is found in the child's hand on waking. No other school employs this method of pupil selection.

Castelobruxo

The Brazilian school for magic, which takes students from all over South America, may be found hidden deep within the rainforest. The fabulous castle appears to be a ruin to the few Muggle eyes that have ever fallen upon it (a trick shared by Hogwarts; opinion is divided on

who got the idea from whom). Castelobruxo is an imposing square edifice of golden rock, often compared to a temple. Both building and grounds are protected by the Caipora, small and furry spirit-beings who are extraordinarily mischievous and tricky, and who emerge under cover of night to watch over the students and the creatures who live in the forest. Former Castelobruxo Headmistress Benedita Dourado was once heard to laugh heartily, on an exchange visit to Hogwarts, when Headmaster Armando Dippet complained of Peeves the poltergeist. Her offer to send him some Caipora for the Forbidden Forest 'to show you what trouble really is' was not accepted.

Castelobruxo students wear bright green robes and are especially advanced in both Herbology and Magizoology; the school offers very popular exchange programmes for European students* who wish to study the magical flora and fauna of South America. Castelobruxo has produced a number of famous ex-students, including one of the world's most famous potioneers, Libatius Borage (author of, among other works, Advanced Potion-Making, Asiatic Anti-Venoms and Have Yourself a Fiesta in a Bottle!), and João Coelho, Captain of the world-renowned Quidditch team the Tarapoto Tree- Skimmers.

It was one of these trips that Bill Weasley's parents could not afford, causing his disappointed penfriend at Castelobruxo to send him something nasty in the post.

Beauxbatons Academy of Magic

Thought to be situated somewhere in the Pyrenees, visitors speak of the breath-taking beauty of a chateau surrounded by formal gardens and lawns created out of the mountainous landscape by magic. Beauxbatons Academy has a preponderance of French students, though Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Luxembourgians and Belgians also attend in large numbers (both Beauxbatons and Durmstrang have a larger studentship than Hogwarts). It is said that the stunning castle and grounds of this prestigious school were part-funded by alchemist gold, for Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel met at Beauxbatons in their youth, and a magnificent fountain in the middle of the school's park, believed to have healing and beautifying properties, is named for them.

Beauxbatons has always enjoyed a cordial relationship with Hogwarts, though there has been a healthy rivalry in international competitions such as the Triwizard Tournament, in which Beauxbatons has sixty-two wins to Hogwarts' sixty-three.

Apart from the Flamels, famous ex-students of Beauxbatons include Vincent Duc de Trefle-Picques, who escaped the Terror by casting a concealment charm on his neck and pretending that his head had already been cut off; Luc Millefeuille, the infamous pastry-maker and

Muggle-poisoner, and Fleur Delacour, who fought in the world-famous Battle of Hogwarts and was awarded medals of bravery from both the French and British Ministries of Magic. Headmistress Olympe Maxime is (in spite of her protestations to the contrary) half-giantess; brilliant, elegant and undeniably awe-inspiring.

Durmstrang Institute

Durmstrang once had the darkest reputation of all eleven wizarding schools, though this was never entirely merited. It is true that Durmstrang, which has turned out many truly great witches and wizards, has twice in its history fallen under the stewardship of wizards of dubious allegiance or nefarious intent, and that it has one infamous ex-pupil.

The first of these unhappy men, Harfang Munter, took over the school shortly after the mysterious death of its founder, the great Bulgarian witch Nerida Vulchanova. Munter established Durmstrang's reputation for duelling and all forms of martial magic, which remain an impressive part of its curriculum today. The second dark period in Durmstrang's history came with the Headmastership of Igor Karkaroff, an ex-Death Eater who fled his post upon the return from exile of Lord Voldemort, fearing the latter's retribution. Karkaroff was an unprincipled and egotistical man who encouraged a culture of fear and intimidation among the students, and many parents withdrew their children from Durmstrang while he was in charge.

The ex-pupil who has done more than any other to cause damage to Durmstrang's reputation is Gellert Grindelwald, one of the most dangerous wizards of the twentieth century. However, in recent years Durmstrang has undergone something of a renaissance, and has produced such international luminaries as international Quidditch star Viktor Krum.

Although believed to be situated in the far north of Europe, Durmstrang is one of the most secretive of all schools about its whereabouts, so nobody can be quite certain. Visitors, who must comply with memory charms to erase their knowledge of how they got there, speak of vast, sprawling grounds with many stunning views, not least of the great, dark, spectral ship that is moored on a mountain lake behind the school, from which students dive in summertime.

Fourteenth Century – Seventeenth Century

Though European explorers called it 'the New World' when they first reached the continent, wizards had known about America long before Muggles (Note: while every nationality has its own term for 'Muggle,' the American community uses the slang term No-Maj, short for 'No Magic'). Various modes of magical travel – brooms and Apparition among them – not to mention visions and premonitions, meant that even far-flung wizarding communities were in contact with each other from the Middle Ages onwards.

The Native American magical community and those of Europe and Africa had known about each other long before the immigration of European No-Majs in the seventeenth century. They were already aware of the many similarities between their communities. Certain families were clearly 'magical', and magic also appeared unexpectedly in families where hitherto there had been no known witch or wizard. The overall ratio of wizards to non-wizards seemed consistent across populations, as did the attitudes of No-Majs, wherever they were born. In the Native American community, some witches and wizards were accepted and even lauded within their tribes, gaining reputations for healing as medicine men, or outstanding hunters. However, others were stigmatised for their beliefs, often on the basis that they were possessed by malevolent spirits.

The legend of the Native American 'skin walker' – an evil witch or wizard that can transform into an animal at will – has its basis in fact. A legend grew up around the Native American Animagi, that they had sacrificed close family members to gain their powers of transformation. In fact, the majority of Animagi assumed animal forms to escape persecution or to hunt for the tribe. Such derogatory rumours often originated with No-Maj medicine men, who were sometimes faking magical powers themselves, and fearful of exposure.

The Native American wizarding community was particularly gifted in animal and plant magic, its potions in particular being of a sophistication beyond much that was known in Europe. The most glaring difference between magic practised by Native Americans and the wizards of Europe was the absence of a wand.

The magic wand originated in Europe. Wands channel magic so as to make its effects both more precise and more powerful, although it is generally held to be a mark of the very greatest witches and wizards that they have also been able to produce wandless magic of a very high quality. As the Native American Animagi and potion-makers demonstrated, wandless magic can attain great complexity, but Charms and Transfiguration are very difficult without one.

Seventeenth Century and Beyond

As No-Maj Europeans began to emigrate to the New World, more witches and wizards of European origin also came to settle in America. Like their No-Maj counterparts, they had a variety of reasons for leaving their countries of origin. Some were driven by a sense of adventure, but most were running away: sometimes from persecution by No-Majs, sometimes from a fellow witch or wizard, but also from the wizarding authorities. The latter sought to blend in among the increasing tide of No-Majs, or hide among the Native American wizarding population, who were generally welcoming and protective of their European brethren.

From the first, however, it was clear that the New World was to be a harsher environment for witches and wizards than the Old World. There were three main reasons for this.

Firstly, like their No-Maj counterparts, they had come to a country with few amenities, except those they made themselves. Back home, they had only to visit the local Apothecary to find the necessities for potions: here, they had to forage among unfamiliar magical plants. There were no established wandmakers, and Ilvermorny School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, which would one day rank among the greatest magical establishments in the world, was at that time no more than a rough shack containing two teachers and two students.

Secondly, the actions of their fellow No-Majs made the non-magical population of most wizards' homelands look lovable. Not only had conflict developed between the immigrants and the Native American population, which struck a blow at the unity of the magical community, their religious beliefs made them deeply intolerant of any trace of magic. The Puritans were happy to accuse each other of occult activity on the slenderest evidence, and New World witches and wizards were right to be extremely wary of them.

The last, and probably the most dangerous problem encountered by wizards newly arrived in North America were the Scourers. As the wizarding community in America was small, scattered and secretive, it had as yet no law enforcement mechanism of its own. This left a vacuum that was filled by an unscrupulous band of wizarding mercenaries of many foreign nationalities, who formed a much-feared and brutal taskforce committed to hunting down not only known criminals, but anyone who might be worth some gold. As time went on, the Scourers became increasingly corrupt. Far away from the jurisdiction of their native magical governments, many indulged a love of authority and cruelty unjustified by their mission. Such Scourers enjoyed bloodshed and torture, and even went so far as trafficking their fellow wizards. The numbers of Scourers multiplied across America in the late seventeenth century and there is evidence that they were not above passing off innocent No-Majs as wizards, to

collect rewards from gullible non-magic members of the community.

The famous Salem Witch Trials of 1692-93 were a tragedy for the wizarding community. Wizarding historians agree that among the so-called Puritan judges were at least two known Scourers, who were paying off feuds that had developed while in America. A number of the dead were indeed witches, though utterly innocent of the crimes for which they had been arrested. Others were merely No-Majs who had the misfortune to be caught up in the general hysteria and bloodlust.

Salem was significant within the magical community for reasons far beyond the tragic loss of life. Its immediate effect was to cause many witches and wizards to flee America, and many more to decide against locating there. This led to interesting variations in the magical population of North America, compared to the populations of Europe, Asia and Africa. Up until the early decades of the twentieth century, there were fewer witches and wizards in the general American population than on the other four continents. Pure-blood families, who were well-informed through wizarding newspapers about the activities of both Puritans and Scourers, rarely left for America. This meant a far higher percentage of No-Maj-born witches and wizards in the New World than elsewhere. While these witches and wizards often went on to marry and found their own all-magical families, the pure-blood ideology that has dogged much of Europe's magical history has gained far less traction in America.

Perhaps the most significant effect of Salem was the creation of the Magical Congress of the United States of America in 1693, pre-dating the No-Maj version by around a century. Known to all American witches and wizards by the abbreviation MACUSA (commonly pronounced as: Mah – cooz – ah), it was the first time that the North American wizarding community came together to create laws for themselves, effectively establishing a magical-world-within-a-No-Maj-world such as existed in most other countries. MACUSA's first task was to put on trial the Scourers who had betrayed their own kind. Those convicted of murder, of wizard-trafficking, torture and all other manners of cruelty were executed for their crimes.

Several of the most notorious Scourers eluded justice. With international warrants out for their arrest, they vanished permanently into the No-Maj community. Some of them married No-Majs and founded families where magical children appear to have been winnowed out in favour of non-magical offspring, to maintain the Scourer's cover. The vengeful Scourers, cast out from their people, passed on to their descendants an absolute conviction that magic was real, and the belief that witches and wizards ought to be exterminated wherever they were found.

American magical historian Theophilus Abbot has identified several such families, each with a deep belief in magic and a great hatred of it. It may be partly due to the anti-magic beliefs and activities of the descendants of Scourer families that North American No-Majs often seem harder to fool and hoodwink on the subject of magic than many other populations. This has had far-reaching repercussions on the way the American wizarding community is governed.

Rappaport's Law

In 1790, the fifteenth President of MACUSA, Emily Rappaport, instituted a law designed to create total segregation of the wizarding and No-Maj communities. This followed one of the most serious breaches of the International Statute of Secrecy, leading to a humiliating censure of MACUSA by the International Confederation of Wizards. The matter was that much more serious because the breach came from within MACUSA itself.

In brief, the catastrophe involved the daughter of President Rappaport's trusted Keeper of Treasure and Dragots (the Dragot is the American wizarding currency and the Keeper of Dragots, as the title implies, is roughly equivalent to the Secretary of the Treasury). Aristotle Twelvetrees was a competent man, but his daughter, Dorcus, was as dim as she was pretty. She had been a poor student at Ilvermorny and at the time of her father's ascension to high office was living at home, hardly ever performing magic, but concentrating mainly on her clothes, the arrangement of her hair and parties.

One day, at a local picnic, Dorcus Twelvetrees became greatly enamoured of a handsome No-Maj called Bartholomew Barebone. Unbeknownst to Dorcus, Bartholomew was a Scourer descendant. Nobody in his family was magic, but his belief in magic was profound and unshakeable, as was his conviction that all witches and wizards were evil.

Totally oblivious to the danger, Dorcus took Bartholomew's polite interest in her 'little tricks' at face value. Led on by her beau's artless questions, she confided the secret addresses of both MACUSA and Ilvermorny, along with information about the International Confederation of Wizards and all the ways in which these bodies sought to protect and conceal the wizarding community.

Having gathered as much information as he could from Dorcus, Bartholomew stole the wand she had obligingly demonstrated for him, showed it to as many pressmen as he could find, then gathered together armed friends and set out to persecute and, ideally, kill all the witches and wizards in the vicinity. Bartholomew further printed leaflets giving the addresses where witches and wizards congregated

and sent letters to prominent No-Majs, some of whom felt it necessary to investigate whether there were indeed 'evil occult parties' happening at the places described.

Giddy with his mission to expose witchcraft in America, Bartholomew Barebone overstepped himself by shooting at what he believed were a group of MACUSA wizards, but which turned out to be No-Majs who had the bad fortune to leave a suspected building while he was watching it. Fortunately nobody was killed, and Bartholomew was arrested and imprisoned for the crime without any need for MACUSA involvement. This was an enormous relief to MACUSA who were struggling to cope with the massive fallout of Dorcus's indiscretions.

Bartholomew had disseminated his leaflets widely, and a few newspapers had taken him seriously enough to print pictures of Dorcus's wand and note that it 'had a kick like a mule' if waved. The attention focused on the MACUSA building was so intense that it was forced to move premises. As President Rappaport was forced to tell the International Confederation of Wizards at a public inquiry, she could not be sure that every last person privy to Dorcus's information had been Obliviated. The leak had been so serious that the after-effects would be felt for many years.

Although many in the magical community campaigned to have her imprisoned for life or even executed, Dorcus spent only a year in jail. Thoroughly disgraced, utterly shellshocked, she emerged into a very different wizarding community and ended her days in seclusion, a mirror and her parrot her dearest companions.

Dorcus's indiscretions led to the introduction of Rappaport's Law. Rappaport's Law enforced strict segregation between the No-Maj and wizarding communities. Wizards were no longer allowed to befriend or marry No-Majs. Penalties for fraternising with No-Majs were harsh. Communication with No-Majs was limited to that necessary to perform daily activities.

Rappaport's Law further entrenched the major cultural difference between the American wizarding community and that of Europe. In the Old World, there had always been a degree of covert cooperation and communication between No-Maj governments and their magical counterparts. In America, MACUSA acted totally independently of the No-Maj government. In Europe, witches and wizards married and were friends with No-Majs; in America, No-Majs were increasingly regarded as the enemy. In short, Rappaport's Law drove the American wizarding community, already dealing with an unusually suspicious No-Maj population, still deeper underground.

1920s Wizarding America

The wizards of America had played their part in the Great War of 1914-1918, even if the overwhelming majority of their No-Maj compatriots were ignorant of their contribution. As there were magical factions on both sides, their efforts were not decisive, but they won many victories in preventing additional loss of life, and in defeating their magical enemies.

This common endeavour led to no softening on MACUSA's stance on No-Maj/wizard fraternisation, and Rappaport's Law remained firmly in place. By the 1920s the US wizarding community had become used to existing under a greater degree of secrecy than their European counterparts and to selecting their mates strictly from within their own ranks.

The memory of Dorcus Twelvetrees' catastrophic breach of the Statute of Secrecy had entered magical language, so that being 'a Dorcus' was slang for an idiot or inept person. MACUSA continued to impose severe penalties on those who flouted the International Statute of Secrecy. MACUSA was also more intolerant of such magical phenomena as ghosts, poltergeists and fantastic creatures than its European equivalents, because of the risk such beasts and spirits posed of alerting No-Majs to the existence of magic.

After the Great Sasquatch Rebellion of 1892 (for full details, see Ortiz O'Flaherty's highly-acclaimed book Big Foot's Last Stand), MACUSA headquarters was relocated for the fifth time in its history, moving from Washington to New York, where it remained throughout the 1920s. President of MACUSA throughout the decade was Madam Seraphina Picquery, a famously gifted witch from Savannah.

By the 1920s Ilvermorny School of Witchcraft and Wizardry had been flourishing for more than two centuries and was widely considered to be one of the greatest magical education establishments in the world. In consequence of their common education, all witches and wizards are proficient in the use of a wand.

Legislation introduced at the end of the nineteenth century meant that every member of the magical community in America was required to carry a 'wand permit', a measure that was intended to keep tabs on all magical activity and identify the perpetrators by their wands. Unlike Britain, where Ollivanders was considered unbeatable, the continent of North America was served by four great wandmakers.

Shikoba Wolfe, who was of Chocktaw descent, was primarily famous for intricately carved wands containing Thunderbird tail feathers (the Thunderbird is a magical American bird closely related to the phoenix). Wolfe wands were generally held to be extremely powerful, though difficult to master. They were particular prized by Transfigurers.

Johannes Jonker, a Muggle-born wizard whose No-Maj father was

an accomplished cabinet maker, turned himself into an accomplished wandmaker. His wands were highly sought after and instantly recognisable, as they were usually inlaid with mother-of-pearl. After experimenting with many cores, Jonker's preferred magical material was hair of the Wampus cat.

Thiago Quintana caused ripples through the magical world when his sleek and usually lengthy wands began entering the market, each encasing a single translucent spine from the back of the White River Monsters of Arkansas and producing spells of force and elegance. Fears about over-fishing of the monsters were assuaged when it was proven that Quintana alone knew the secret of luring them, a secret he guarded jealously until his death, at which point wands containing White River Monster spines ceased production.

Violetta Beauvais, the famous wandmaker of New Orleans, refused for many years to divulge the secret core of her wands, which were always made of swamp mayhaw wood. Eventually it was discovered that they contained hair of the rougarou, the dangerous dog-headed monster that prowled Louisiana swamps. It was often said of Beauvais wands that they took to Dark magic like vampires to blood, yet many an American wizarding hero of the 1920s went into battle armed only with a Beauvais wand, and President Picquery herself was known to possess one.

Unlike the No-Maj community of the 1920s, MACUSA allowed witches and wizards to drink alcohol. Many critics of this policy pointed out that it made witches and wizards rather conspicuous in cities full of sober No-Majs. However, in one of her rare light-hearted moments, President Picquery was heard to say that being a wizard in America was already hard enough. 'The Gigglewater', as she famously told her Chief of Staff, 'is non-negotiable.'

2014 Quidditch World Cup: The Full Story

Qualified Countries:

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- *Brazil,*
- *Bulgaria,*
- *Chad,*
- *Fiji*
- *Germany*
- *Haiti*
- *Ivory Coast*
- *Jamaica*
- *Japan*
- *Liechtenstein*
- *New Zealand*
- *Nigeria*
- *Norway*
- *Poland*
- *USA*
- *Wales*

ROUND ONE!

Norway (340) vs. Ivory Coast (100)

On 13 April 2014, Norway played against Ivory Coast, winning 340 to 100. Ivory Coast seemed not up to their usual level, and were easily beaten in two hours by Norway. Norwegian Chaser Lars Lundekvam was twice the target of jinxes from wizards still angry about the disaster at the opening ceremony in the crowds, and the match had to be halted twice as security wizards tried to find out the source of the jinxes. Ivorian Chaser Elodie Dembélé scored 7 of Ivory Coast's 10 goals. In the end, Norwegian Seeker Sigrid Kristoffersen beat Sylvian Boigny to the Snitch in the 128th minute.

Nigeria (400) vs. Fiji (160)

On 14 May 2014, Nigeria played against Fiji, winning 400 to 160. The match started badly for the Fijian side, as the Beaters Quintia Qarase and Narinder Singh lacked the ferocity of their Nigerian counterparts Aliko Okoye and Mercy Ojukwu — the Bludgers inflicted, as a result, serious damage to the Fijian Chasers, who scored only a single goal while Nigeria scored 40.

In the 141st minute, Fijian Seeker Joseph Snuka — who had previously been dubbed an egoist by teammates — captured the Snitch, when his team was trailing 400 to 10. This move was met with the bewilderment of commentators, the fury of the Fijian supporters and the jeers of the Nigerians, as the game finished with a bruising defeat to Fiji.

Fijian manager and trainer Hector Bolobolo's only comment after the match was "I'm going to kill him".

Brazil (100) vs. Haiti (90)

The third match, between Brazil and Haiti, took place on 15 May 2014. Brazil won the match 100 to 90, following Haiti's disqualification for illegal capture of the Snitch.

During the early hours of the game, the Brazilian side Chasers Diaz, Alonso and Flores made as many as thirty assaults on the goal hoops; that they scored only ten goals is testimony to Haitian Keeper Lenelle Paraison's agility and courage. Paraison's nose was twice broken during the first sixty minutes, one of them by a Bludger mis-hit by her own teammate, Beater Jean-Baptiste Bloncourt. At the other end of the pitch, star Haitian Chaser Clairvius Hyppolite was responsible for eight of his side's nine goals.

In spite of Brazil's narrow lead in the fourth hour, many felt that

the Haitian side was outplaying the Brazilians when Bloncourt hit Haitian Seeker Sylvian Jolicoeur (who was within inches of capturing the Snitch) with one of his poorly-aimed Bludgers, and knocked him out cold. The Snitch then flew up Bloncourt's sleeve — the Beater wrestled the Snitch out of his undergarments and held it up triumphantly, in clear violation of the rules of the game. Haiti was instantly disqualified.

Following the match, Haitian Seeker Jolicoeur was reported to have been making a good recovery, and Beater Bloncourt to be in hiding at an undisclosed location.

USA (240) vs. Jamaica (230)

The fourth match of the tournament was on 16 May 2014, between the United States and Jamaica. The final score of USA 240 to Jamaica 230 was not immediately ruled valid by the ICWQC since there was suspicion of magical interference from someone in the crowd which, according to an amendment to the rules of Quidditch in 1849, would result in their team forfeiting the match, whether or not the team ordered or approved of the magic performed.

Jamaican Keeper Kquewanda Bailey suddenly and unexpectedly toppled from her broom shortly before US Chaser Quentin Kowalski scored their ninth goal. The Keeper's fall was hampered by a well-timed Arresto Momentum cast by the referee and, seconds later, on the 52nd minute,US Seeker Darius Smackhammer caught the Snitch ahead of Jamaican counterpart Shanice Higgins, resulting in a narrow victory for the United States.

The timing of Bailey's sudden unconsciousness was so convenient that the ICWQC thoroughly examined the possibility of crowd interference. The crowd's Omnioculars, from all over the stadium, were scrutinised, but no compelling evidence from the American supporters was retrieved. Later that afternoon, it was confirmed that Bailey was suffering from an infected Sasabonsam bite, sustained during the disastrous World Cup opening ceremony. USA, thus, passed into the quarter-finals.

Liechtenstein (470) vs. Chad (330)

Starting the 17 May 2014, the match between Chad and Liechtenstein was the longest yet, and finally ended on the third day, 19 May 2014.

Players took a short rest after eleven hours of continuous play, in which both sides displayed their evenly matched power. Each goal was hard won against Beaters showing superb precision and power. The Snitch was within catching range thrice, but thrice the Seekers were bested by well-hit Bludgers. The man of the match on the first

day was Liechtenstein Chaser Willi Wenzel, who took two Bludgers to the head but still managed to score the third goal of the match from a distance of sixty yards. The score at the end of the first day was 140 to 120 in favour of Chad.

Players began to show severe signs of fatigue as the second day of the match, 18 May 2014, limped to a close. The Snitch had literally hovered above Chadian Seeker Jacques Miskine's left eyebrow for five minutes before he noticed it, and even then his reaction was so slow the Snitch was able to escape. Liechtenstein Chaser Otmar Frick was believed to have fallen asleep shortly before play was stopped for the evening. The score at the end of the second day was 260 to 250 in favor of Liechtenstein.

On the third day, Chad was just ahead in goals when the exhausted Liechtenstein Seeker Bruno Bruunhart managed to grab the Snitch inches from the outstreched hand of Miskine. When the teams finally reached solid ground, they wept and embraced in a pleasing show of solidarity and sportsmanship, and then went to receive medical treatment. The final score is Liechtenstein 470 to Chad 330 and the winning team will face the USA in the quarter-finals.

Bulgaria (410) vs. New Zealand (170)

The sixth match, between Bulgaria and New Zealand, took place on 20 May 2014.

On the 106th minute, referee Georgios Xenakis sent New Zealand Chaser Dennis Moon off, following a mid-air collision between him and Bulgarian Chaser Bogomil Levski, which he ruled was deliberately caused by Moon. Whether or not Xenakis was influenced by rumours that Moon and Levski have a long-standing feud (since the crash appeared accidental from many parts of the stadium), his decision undoubtedly turned the match in Bulgaria's favour. New Zealand manager Charlie Baverstock proclaimed himself "madder than a bloke who's been locked in a box of Fwoopers" at the decision. The Bulgarian side showed flashes of inspiration as they racked up an impressive score against the six-strong Kiwis. Viktor Krum's capture of the Snitch ahead of twenty-one-year-old Ngapo Ponika on the 134th minute was enough to dispel earlier criticism that Krum, who at age 38 is the oldest player in the competition, was taking the place of a younger player on "sentimental" grounds.

Bulgaria won 410 to 170, and will play joint favourites Norway in the quarter-to finals.

Japan (350) vs. Poland (140)

The seventh match, between Japan and Poland took place on 21

May. A well-played game all around, the match ended in a decisive victory for Japan, who's Beaters, Hongo and Shingo were recently voted second only to the legendary 1994 Bulgarian Beaters, Volkov and Vulchanov as best all-time Beater duo. Despite the Polish teams best efforts, the team's relative lack of experience cost them the match against Japan. Polish Seeker Wladyslaw Wolfke was the highlight of the game, a graceful and daring flier, missed the Snitch early in the game, and was only just beaten to it by Seeker Noriko Sato in the 59th minute of play.

Wales (330) vs. Germany (100)

22 May 2014 saw the eighth and last match of the first round, Wales versus Germany. The match went on without incident, until German Seeker Thorsten Pfeffer attempted the life-threatening Wronski Feint, failing to pull out in time and colliding with the ground at what onlookers estimated to be sixty miles per hour. Pfeffer was saved by the quick action of Healers, who swiftly flooded the pitch and administered Skelegro — Pfeffer survived the match and manager Franziska Faust later told the reporters that he was likely to make a complete recovery, although he had broken most of his bones and currently believed himself to be a budgerigar called Klaus.

Eleven minutes after Pfeffer was stretchered off the field, Welsh Seeker Eurig Cadwallader caught the Snitch, ending the match with a final score of Wales 330 to Germany 100. Neither players nor crowd were in a celebratory mood, and only once Welsh manager Gwenog Jones had heard that Pfeffer would survive did she tell the press she was "'bloody delighted". Wales will now face Brazil in the quarter-finals.

Quarter-Finals

Brazil (460) vs. Wales (300)

The first match of the quarter-finals was on 4 June 2014. Brazil played against Wales, winning 460 to 300. This proved to be the most contentious game thus far in the tournament: tensions between Brazil and Wales had begun shortly before the opening ceremony of the Cup in April, when it became public that Brazilian manager José Barboza called the Welsh Chasers "talentless hags", which unleashed the ire of Welsh manager Gwenog Jones, who threatened to "curse the face off" him (as it turns out, Barboza's remarks were said over a few drinks with loose-lipped veteran journalist Rita Skeeter). Even though Barboza was quick to issue the statement that his original remark had been taken out of context, Jones missed no opportunity to belittle and

insult the Brazilians ever since learning that her team would face them in the quarter-finals. On the day of the match, she was even prevented from entering the stadium in an "IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN HAITI" T-shirt (Brazil passed into the quarter-finals when opponents Haiti were disqualified), so missed the opening ten minutes of the match, which were notable for the ferocity of play and three brutal fouls.

Brazilian Chasers Diaz, Alonso and Flores put in a solid performance, regardless of the ferocity of the other players. Welsh Beater Iefan Rice viciously sent a Bludger to Brazilian Keeper Raul Almeida's head while the Quaffle was at the other end of the pitch, which earned Brazil a penalty. Special correspondent to the Daily Prophet Ginny Potter later commented it "arguably should have seen Rice sent off". Welsh Chaser Jackie Jernigan scored one of the tournament's most stunning goals from a distance of fifty yards, while it is estimated that Beater Darren Floyd single-handedly prevented at least seventeen Brazilian goals. The game ended following a stunning Snitch capture by Brazilian Seeker Tony Silva, who performed a spectacular dive in the 131st minute of the match to seize victory from under his counterpart Eurig Cadwallader's nose.

As the Brazilians seized victory, Gwenog Jones attempted to make good her promise to curse off José Barboza's face in full view of the packed stadium. The Welsh manager was dragged from the pitch by her own Beaters, and was later put in custody. The Daily Prophet later reported that Healers confirmed Barboza's skin had almost regrown, and that he was in excellent spirits.

Bulgaria (170) vs. Norway (20)

The second quarter-final match, on 6 June 2014, was played between Bulgaria and Norway. It was labeled, by the Daily Prophet's Quidditch correspondent Ginny Potter, as "one of the biggest upsets of the tournament" — the Norwegians, one of the joint favourites, were ousted by the Bulgarian side, who many considered lucky to have qualified in the first place, 170 to 20.

Bulgaria showed good form straight from the start of the match. Nikola Vassileva was responsible for both of Bulgaria's early goals, but Norway's Lars Lundekvam soon equalised. The end came almost without warning: in the 42nd minute, Bulgarian Seeker Viktor Krum performed what looked like simple Bludger-avoidance, and his Norwegian counterpart Sigrid Kristoffersen not only neglected to mark him, but was actually looking the other way. After Krum raised his right hand to show he had secured the Bulgarians' victory, Kristoffersen flew directly to the ground and banged her head on it until she was dragged to her feet by Keeper Karl Wang. Krum, who had been written off by many journalists as too old and slow to

compete at 38 years old, was borne from the pitch in triumph by fans.

Norwegian coach Oddvar Spillum had no post-match comment for reporters, apart from broken sobs. Many fans blame the Selma that the team brought as a mascot (and which was the cause of a bloodbath at the opening ceremony) for the usually outstanding Norwegians' lack of luck.

USA (450) vs. Liechtenstein (290)

The third quarter-final match was played between USA and Liechtenstein on 8 June, with the USA taking the victory with 450 points against Liechtenstein's 290.

Both teams performed remarkably. US Chaser Quentin Kowalski earned praises for his deft weaving and rolling, while Liechtensteiner Otmar Frick was the game's top scorer with 16 goals. Top praise, however, goes to American Seeker Darius Smackhammer, who secured the USA's place for a semi-final in a daring capture of the Golden Snitch on the 148th minute: it involved a breakneck dash through the cross fire of both Bludgers and risked collision with Liechtenstein Chaser Willi Wenzel to get to the Snitch hovering near Wenzel's left ankle.

Having historically put up a poor show in international Quidditch, being the only country to have embraced the game of Quodpot, the Americans could not help but celebrate this quarter-final win as though they had won the Cup. Red, white, and blue sparks were thick in the air after the victory, harried ICWQC officials failing to quell such jubilation. The celebrations required the casting of about 2000 Memory Charms on Muggles living around the edge of the desert, and special measures were taken to conceal them from aeroplanes. A futher incident included the kidnapping of Liechtenstein mascot Hans the Augurey by American fans, something that was only solved following terse negotiations between President of the Magical Congress of the United States of America Samuel G. Quahog and Liechtenstein Minister for Magic Otto Obermeier.

Japan (270) vs. Nigeria (100)

The fourth, and last, quarter-final match of the Cup saw Japan defeat Nigeria 270 to 100. The final result was a surprise, given that Nigeria was one of the tournament's favourites, but Japan put in a near flawless performance. The match lasted 63 minutes.

The highlight of the match was the veritable master class of Bludger work the Beaters of the two competing nations put on: Okoye and Ojukwu on the one hand, and Shingo and Hongo on the other, framed the action; special Quidditch correspondent to the Daily Prophet Ginny Potter pointed out that "[this] match ought to be

remembered as the Battle of the Beaters". The turning point of the game was the staggeringly powerful shot hit by Hongo, that smashed the tail off Nigerian Seeker Samuel Equiano's broomstick (a Thunderbolt VII; professional brooms ought to be able to withstand all Bludger blows and an inquiry was immediately put underway). As Equiano span out of control, Japanese Seeker Noriko Sato soared through the middle of the action to seize the Snitch from the midst of distracted Nigerian players intent on saving their teammate.

Japan passes into the semi-finals where they will meet Bulgaria.

Semi-Finals

The cup is now down to four teams: USA, Brazil, Japan, and Bulgaria. Former Beater Ludo Bagman reckoned he has the lowdown on every team in the semi-finals of the 2014 Quidditch World Cup, and rated their chances in the Daily Prophet, as seen in the infographic at the left:

Brazil: 9/1
USA: 12/1

Japan: 4/1
Bulgaria: 50/1

USA (310) vs. Brazil (420)

The first match of the semi-finals was played Friday, 4 July 2014 to Saturday, 5 July 2014; USA took on Brazil in a game riddled with nerves.

The match went on for more than a day; at the close of the first day, the States were leading 120 to Brazil's 100. The game ended in the twentieth hour of play, with Brazil winning 420 to 310. Players on both sides showed signs of stress, causing them to drop Quaffles, miss-hit Bludgers, and fail to protect their hoops; US Chaser Mercy Wardwell dropped the Quaffle five times before beating her head repeatedly against her broom handle until restrained by Seeker Darius Smackhammer. Fernando Diaz and Alejandra Alonso both had two Quaffle drops apiece, and Lucas Picquery's miss-hit Bludger hit Keeper Susan Blancheflower in the face (Blancheflower then attempted to jump onto Picquery's broom to remonstrate with him): soon after she made the elementary mistake of coming too far outside of the Scoring Circle, allowing Alonso to give Brazil a temporary lead, which Quentin Kowalski reversed as night fell. The sun rising over the Patagonian desert gave testimony to the skill of both sides; dynamic Quaffle play by Chaser trios on both sides could have won the match for either side, but in the end it was Brazilian Keeper Raul Almeida who decided the battle of the Quaffle, as he repeatedly repelled American assaults on the hoops. The match came down to a fight for the Snitch, first spotted by Darius Smackhammer. Smackhammer may have won the match for the US, if it hadn't been for a pair of precision-hit Bludgers directed his way by Brazilian Beaters Santos and Clodoaldo, which forced him off-course. Brazilian Seeker Silva raced each other on the very tips of their brooms, spiraling toward the ground before Silva caught the Snitch, ending the game in a Brazilian victory.

Japan (460) vs. Bulgaria (610)

The first match was followed by the Japan versus Bulgaria clash, which took place on Sunday 6 July 2014. For a World Cup that started out in such chaos and international hostility, the second match of the semi-finals was a refreshing display of sportsmanship. The match was decided exactly by Krum's 10th hour capture of the Snitch, putting the final scores at Bulgaria: 610 to Japan: 460. The early stages of the game were dominated by Shingo and Hongo, who's elegant Bludger work stopped play twice within the first hour of play. Soon after came a display of international sportsmanship that will go down in the annals of Quidditch history. With Bludgers flying around like the cannonballs they so oft resemble, Vulchanov deliberately intercepted a

Bludger with his body to protect Krum. Vulchanov was knocked out and fell from his broom, only to be saved by Noriko Sato. Krum, instead of taking advantage of Sato's temporary incapacitation, pulled up and let the Snitch go by. By the 8th hour of play, it looked as though Krum would regret his previous sportsmanship; Japan was leading by 250 points, largely thanks to the work of Chasers Ryuichi Yamaguchi, Kimiko Kurosawa, and Yoshi Wakahisa, who showed that Japan had more than just two excellent Beaters on her team. As the game proceeded into what would be its final hours, the Bulgarian's determination began to pay off. The Snitch appeared for the second time; Krum raced Sato, driving her off, but refusing to catch the Snitch, a vote of confidence in his team and a stark contrast to his infamous catch in the '94 match against Ireland when he ended the game to avoid further humiliation for his team. Krum's second refusal to end the game marked the turning point of the match: the Bulgarians chipped away at Japan's lead, eventually tying up the score by sheer determination. Krum's faith and reputation proved true when in the 10th hour he performed "a magnificent piece of diversionary flying" which tricked Sato into believing he was escaping Hongo's line of sight. Before anyone, even his own teammates realised what had happened, Krum had caught the Snitch and secured victory for Bulgaria.

Finals

Japan (330) vs. USA (120) - 2014 QWC 3rd Place

The USA-Japan match determining third place took place on 9 July, during which Japan won with a score of 330 against 120. The match was brief, it was bloody and few will disagree that it was brutal. Japan, who many thought would go all the way in this tournament, and the USA, for whom 2014 has been a breakthrough year, have both had remarkable World Cups. All fourteen players in this third place play-off can hold their heads high tonight, though for some – notably American Chaser Arsenia Gonzales, who took two Bludgers to the face in the 34th minute – it will be extremely painful. The USA did well to score twelve times against Keeper Todoroki, an undersung hero of the Japanese side who was on superb form, while Beaters Hongo and Shingo were simply unstoppable. At the other end of the pitch, Chasers Yamaguchi, Kurosawa and Wakahisa put eighteen goals past Keeper Susan Blancheflower before Japanese Seeker Noriko Sato put in one of the most spectacular dives of the tournament. Zooming through flying Bludgers and a tangle of Chasers she successfully seized the Snitch from under the heel of American Mercy Wardwell, leaving Darius Smackhammer in a broom-lock with

Lucas Picquery. Once on the ground, the teams embraced in a heart-warming show of sportsmanship. Word has since reached us that the Japanese have presented the American team – whose supporters famously kidnapped Hans the Augurey, the Liechtenstein mascot – with a Hoo-hoo chick.

GRAND FINAL!!!

Bulgaria vs. Brazil

Time Coverhart

The stadium is full and the noise is deafening. We await the arrival o the team's mascots, who will put on a pre-match show. The Bulgarians, o course, bring their celebrated dancing troupe of Veelas, which constitutes major reason for the team's popularity, at least with men. Brazil' Curupiras have already caused a great deal of mischief so far thi tournament but are similarly popular, mostly with children. Securit wizards stand by all around the perimeter in case of trouble.

The VIP boxes are now full. Chairman of the ICWQC, Mentor Metaxas to the President of the Argentinian Council of Magic, Valentin Vázquez, but all eyes are on Box Two, where Dumbledore's Army sit unde close guard, to prevent mobbing by an overexcited crowd. The Potte family – minus Mother, Ginny Potter, who of course is here in th journalists' enclosure with me – have been given prime places in the fron row. All are wearing the red of Bulgaria except middle child Albus, who i sporting Brazilian green. This will undoubtedly send the gossips int overdrive – what message is young Albus sending us all by choosing t support a team other than his father's? A team, lest we forget, that i competing against his father's ex-rival, now friend, Viktor Krum. Are w witnessing a very public, very ugly display of father-son rivalry? M colleague, Ginny Potter, who is sitting close enough to read everything m Quick-Quotes Quill is scribbling, informs me that Albus is a great fan o Brazilian Chaser Gonçalo Flores. That, of course, would be one possibl explanation for this oddly public parade of familial dissent.

The crowd roar as the gates open and the mascot troupes assemble the Bulgarian Veela, dressed in diaphanous gowns and dancing to th haunting strains of harp music. Several men's jaws have dropped here i the journalists' enclosure and, judging by the number of droppe notebooks, many also appear to have lost sensation in their fingers.

In VIP Box Two, Ronald Weasley appears to have become catatonic just see wife Hermione Granger administer a sharp elbow to the ribs?

Ginny Potter: Here come the Curupiras with their bright red hair and back-to front feet. Tumbling, performing acrobatics, stealing hats from fans and generally creating mayhem, the stadium is greatly enjoying their antics.

Rita Skeeter: It always enchanting to observe young people enjoying the culture of wizarding nations. Unfortunately, Master Teddy Lupin and Ms Victoire Weasley appear to be far more interested in what they are saying to each other than – I take that back. In what some may see as a somewhat belated show of parental authority, Mr Bill Weasley has swapped places with his now very sulky-looking daughter and is directing her attention to the pitch. It is indeed a terrible waste not to drink in the magnificent spectacle now unfolding before us, with the colours and dancing and whatnot.

Rita Skeeter: Harry Potter is scratching his ear.

Ginny Potter: The opening ceremony concludes with an interesting Veela/Curupira pyramid formation. If several back to front feet found themselves in the Veela's eyes, the latter have resisted the temptation to transform into the terrifying Harpy-like form that gave many children – myself included – nightmares after their 1994 display.

Ginny Potter: And here come the two teams – Brazil in green, Bulgaria in red!

Rita Skeeter: Almost all of the Weasley family are supporting Brazil. Certainly no one can have expected Ronald to cheer on his wife's ex-boyfriend. Both his children – Rose, who appears to have inherited her father's unfortunate hair, and Hugo, who has his mother's bushy locks – are decked out in green, but Hermione Granger is not wearing anything to indicate which team she is supporting. Does she secretly hope to see Krum take the trophy at last? Or is this the kind of diplomatic neutrality one might expect of a ruthless careerist whose long-term ambition is undoubtedly to be Minister for Magic?

Ginny Potter: And they're off! Fourteen players rise into the air for the 427th Quidditch World Cup final!

Rita Skeeter: Neville Longbottom is already on his feet cheering, even though nothing has really happened yet. Is he drunk?

Ginny Potter: The Quaffle is in Brazil's possession but slick defence from Draganov and Vulchanov has so far prevented them from scoring. Flores, Diaz and Alonso are relentless, ducking and weaving as they try to find a way past the Bulgarian Beaters.

Rita Skeeter: Luna Lovegood appears to be passing out some kind of snack to her fellow Seekers in the VIP box. Some might hesitate to accept baked goods from Lovegood, whose schoolgirl nickname, I am reliably informed, was 'Loony'.

Ginny Potter: An excellent intercept by Bulgarian Chaser Levski and Bulgaria are heading towards the goal – thrown to Vassileva – ouch! Even the Brazilians groaned in sympathy there as a Bludger hit Vassileva hard in the

throat. She drops the Quaffle, which is caught by Flores. Brazil are back i possession!

Neville Longbottom is laughing hard at something that Harry Potter ha leaned across and whispered to him. What is so amusing? Why such a open display of humour in full view of the public? Surely Potter is awar that everybody in the stadium can see him? Is it not rather elitist to enjo 'private' jokes with fellow celebrities when people in the cheap seat cannot hear them?

Gotcha! It's first blood to Brazil with a spectacular goal from Flores!

Harry Potter has almost toppled out of the VIP box cheering hi Quidditch hero. His uncle Ronald seized the back of his robes and save him from what would surely have been a death of internationa significance, spawning news stories across the wizarding world. Brothe James is laughing heartily (did he push his brother?). Harry Potter appear completely unconcerned, merely handing his second son one of 'Loony Lovegood's treats.

Dimitrov and Vulchanov are successfully disrupting the Brazilian Beaters, preventing the formidable trio from scoring a second goal, bu Bulgaria is relying far too much on their defence and their last touch of th Quaffle resulted in a drop and fumble by Grozda. No sign of the Snitch s far.

Harry Potter is cheering every well-hit Bulgarian Bludger, whereas hi supposed best friend Ronald Weasley appears to be gnashing his teeth i chagrin. Hermione Granger is yawning. Whether she intends to conve boredom, or is merely exhausted after Dumbledore's Army's long night o noisy revelry in the VIP section of the campsite, her Argentinian hosts ca only be offended by such blatant rudeness.

Grigor Dimitrov breaks through the Brazilian defence and equalises! Te

Head of the Department of Magical Transportation Percy Weasley i scowling as he follows the match. Greying and balding, he has age considerably since the Battle of Hogwarts (where, of course, he became th unfortunate embodiment of the phrase 'better late than never'). Unkin political opponents may call him a 'nit-picking bureaucrat', but others g as far as to say that he is 'not that bad once you get to know him'.

A sudden burst of quick-fire Quaffle passes has resulted in a brace o goals for Brazil, whose Chasers are tearing up and down the pitch. Gonçal Flores has scored twice more and Fernando Diaz once, taking the score t 40-10. Bulgaria are making too many careless mistakes and need to tak the offensive. Brazil looking far the stronger team at this point.

Charlie Weasley – or 'The Unmarried Weasley' as he is often known - i handsome chap carrying several burns due to his work with dragons. Like hi sister-in-law Hermione 'Bored Yawn' Granger, he is paying little attentio

to the match, preferring what seems to be a most interesting talk with Rol Scamander, husband of 'Loony' Lovegood. How difficult it has been t marry 'into' Dumbledore's Army we can only speculate. Nobody wh witnessed it will ever forget the shock on Scamander's face when he saw Lovegood's wedding dress – rainbows, spangles and a tiara of silve unicorn horns, voted 'Most Hideous Outfit of the Year' by readers of m regular Daily Prophet column. While Lovegood and Scamander appear t be holding hands in the VIP box, this might well be because Rolf is tryin to prevent his wife from putting on one of her famous Special Event Hats.

GAME **SNITCH HAS BEEN SIGHTED!** With the score standing at 50-2 **Ginny Potter** (following goals one minute apart from Alonso and Vassileva) a flash o gold near the Brazilian hoops leads Silva and Krum into a breakneck chas – Beaters and Chasers scatter – Krum is ahead but narrowly misses capture – as the Snitch soars upwards, both Seekers appear to be dazzle by the brilliant Argentinian sun – the Snitch has disappeared again.

Ginny Potter George Weasley, wealthy co-owner of joke shop Weasleys' Wizar **Skeeters** Wheezes, has only one ear. This disability did not prevent him fro marrying his dead brother's ex-girlfriend Angelina Johnson, or fro fathering two children with her: Fred and Roxanne. They are putting on show of family togetherness up in the box. However, few will forget th recent rumours that – in spite of the plentiful gold brought in by suc inventions as Puking Pastilles – Angelina has grown restless in he marriage and recently left the marital home to – my colleague, Ginn Potter, has just informed me that Angelina left the marital home to care fo her sick father. Many will think that a likely story. Meanwhile, Tedd Lupin and Victoire Weasley have taken advantage of their elder inattention to find their way back into adjacent seats.

Ginny Potter Moments after Diaz lengthens Brazil's lead – 60-20 – Beater Santos hit Viktor Krum hard over the head with his bat. The referee is examinin Omniocular footage to determine whether a foul has been committed. Th game has been paused.

Skeeter A great groan has issued from the crowd, undoubtedly in response t Ginny Weasley flagrantly and openly kissing his wife on the cheek. Thi piece of disgusting exhibitionism appears to have disgusted spectators – m colleague, Ginny Potter, has just informed me that the crowd groane because one of the players has sustained an injury.

Ginny Potter Foul! German referee Herman Junker concludes that Rafael Santo did not mean to hit Viktor Krum around the back of the skull with hi Beater's bat. Krum signals that he is fit to continue and play resumes!

Skeeter Kind-hearted Hermione Granger did not notice her ex-boyfriend's injur immediately, due to the ill-judged public display of affection instigated b her husband, but she swiftly put on a display of concern. The same canno be said for Neville Longbottom, who appears to be spiritedly describing th precise manner in which Krum sustained his nosebleed for the benefit o

his godson, Albus Potter. An oddly callous display from the popula
Herbology teacher.

Harry Potter 00:38 Many minutes after play resumes, Krum and Silva are rocketing
Ron Weasley 00:38 Bodily upwards - five thousand Omnioculars follow the pair into th
dazzling Argentinian sun -

Rita Skeeter 00:39 Dumbledore's Army seem agitated and tense. Has one of them
Ron Weasley 00:39 Spectacularly offended the others? Have bitter wounds been reopened here, i
front of thousands of people, where everybody hoped merely to enjoy
unique sporting occasion? Ought Dumbledore's Army draw such flagran
attention to themselves when - apparently - something exciting i
happening on the pitch? Or are they using this as a cover to air ol
grievances?

Harry Potter 00:40 Krum and Silva are in a breakneck dash for the Snitch, which Silv
Ron Weasley 00:40 Bottom first – he is four feet ahead of Krum as both rise almost vertically –

Rita Skeeter 00:41 Everyone is on their feet, including the denizens of the VIP boxes
Ron Weasley 00:41 Harry Potter is shouting – if my lip-reading is accurate, Ronald Weasley i
swearing –

Harry Potter 00:42 Krum is gaining on Silva but will it be enough…?
Ron Weasley 00:42

Rita Skeeter 00:43 Bloody Lupin has accidentally punched his girlfriend on the nose as h
Ron Weasley 00:43 greets – are we about to witness a breakup, live at the Quidditch
World Cup?

Harry Potter 00:43 Krum and Silva neck and neck –
Ron Weasley 00:43

Rita Skeeter 00:44 Bloody Lupin and Victoire Weasley snuggled up together again – don'
Ron Weasley 00:44 they care about Quidditch at all? Should they be taking up valuable spac
in this stadium, when all eyes ought to be glued on the pitch? When s
many poor witches or wizards would simply love to be here?

Harry Potter 00:45 KRUM'S GOT THE SNITCH! BULGARIA HAS WON!
Ron Weasley 00:45

Rita Skeeter 00:45 I can't see the VIP boxes – everyone is jumping up and down –
Ron Weasley 00:45

Harry Potter 00:46 The crowds are going crazy – after two and three-quarter hours in th
Ron Weasley 00:46 blazing Argentinian sun, Bulgaria has won the Quidditch World Cup an
Krum has achieved his life's ambition on the third attempt – it looks like h
might fall off his broom – tears are streaming down his face – a hugel
popular win here in the Patagonian Desert – but hearty commiserations t
Brazil - they led almost all the way, and in the end, it was Krum the Seeke
who defeated them. A stunning display of sportsmanship here, as Silva an
Krum embrace –

Rita Skeeter 00:47 Ah, that's better – people are calming down, I can now see the VI
Ron Weasley 00:47 Quite well, Dumbledore's Army seems to approve of the victory, Harr
Potter in particular seems emotional – with a determined grin on his face
Ronald Weasley conceals his inevitable annoyance that his wife's ex-love i

being feted by the Quidditch world – young Albus is applauding, doubtless at the prompting of his publicity hungry father – my colleague, Ginny Potter, is approaching me, no doubt with another tedious correc

Ginny Skeeter has been taken unaccountably ill with what some ar Potter a jinx to the solar plexus. As celebrations continue here in th Patagonian Desert, we at the Daily Prophet sincerely hope that you hav enjoyed our World Cup coverage from Argentina. Next week, the Nationa Gobstones League comes to Birmingham! But in all honesty… don't bother

Dumbledore's Army Reunites at Quidditch World Cup Final

By the Daily Prophet's Gossip Corrienspondent, Rita Skeeter (8 July 2014)

There are celebrities – and then there are celebrities. We've seen many a famous face from the wizarding world grace the stands here in the Patagonian Desert – Ministers and Presidents, Celestina Warbeck, controversial American wizarding band The Bent-Winged Snitches – all have caused flurries of excitement, with crowd members scrambling for autographs and even casting Bridging Charms to reach the VIP boxes over the heads of the crowd.

But when word swept the campsite and stadium that a certain gang of infamous wizards (no longer the fresh-faced teenagers they were in their heyday, but nevertheless recognisable) had arrived for the final, excitement was beyond anything yet seen. As the crowd stampeded, tents were flattened and small children mown down. Fans from all corners of the globe stormed towards the area where members of Dumbledore's Army were rumoured to have been sighted, desperate above all else for a glimpse of the man they still call the Chosen One.

The Potter family and the rest of Dumbledore's Army have been given accommodation in the VIP section of the campsite, which is protected by heavy charms and patrolled by Security Warlocks. Their presence has ensured large crowds along the cordoned area, all hoping for a glimpse of their heroes. At 3pm today they got their wish when, to the accompaniment of loud screams, Potter took his young sons James and Albus to visit the players' compound, where he introduced them to Bulgarian Seeker Viktor Krum.

About to turn 34, there are a couple of threads of silver in the famous Auror's black hair, but he continues to wear the distinctive round glasses that some might say are better suited to a style-deficient twelve-year-old. The famous lightning scar has company: Potter is sporting a nasty cut over his right cheekbone. Requests for information as to its provenance merely produced the usual response from the Ministry of Magic: 'We do not comment on the top secret work of the Auror department, as we have told you no less than 514 times, Ms. Skeeter.' So what are they hiding? Is the Chosen One embroiled in fresh mysteries that will one day explode upon us all, plunging us into a new age of terror and mayhem?

Or does his injury have a more humble origin, one that Potter is

desperate to hide? Has his wife perhaps cursed him? Are cracks beginning to show in a union that the Potters are determined to promote as happy? Should we read anything into the fact that his wife Ginevra has been perfectly happy to leave her husband and children behind in London whilst reporting on this tournament? The jury is out on whether she really had the talent or experience to be sent to the Quidditch World Cup (jury's back in – no!!!) but let's face it, when your last name is Potter, doors open, international sporting bodies bow and scrape, and Daily Prophet editors hand you plum assignments.

As their devoted fans and followers will remember, Potter and Krum competed against each other in the controversial Triwizard Tournament, but apparently there are no hard feelings, as they embraced upon meeting (what really happened in that maze? Speculation is unlikely to be quelled by the warmth of their greeting). After half an hour's chat, Potter and his sons returned to the campsite where they socialised with the rest of Dumbledore's Army until the small hours.

In the next tent are Potter's two closest associates, the ones who know everything about him and yet have always refused to talk to the press. Are they afraid of him, or is it their own secrets they are afraid will leak out, tarnishing the myth of He Who Could Not Be Named's defeat? Now married, Ronald Weasley and Hermione Granger were with Potter almost every step of the way. Like the rest of Dumbledore's Army, they fought in the Battle of Hogwarts and no doubt deserve the plaudits and awards for bravery heaped upon them by a grateful wizarding world.

In the immediate aftermath of the battle Weasley, whose famous ginger hair appears to be thinning slightly, entered into employment with the Ministry of Magic alongside Potter, but left only two years later to co-manage the highly successful wizarding joke emporium Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes. Was he, as he stated at the time, 'delighted to assist my brother George with a business I've always loved'? Or had he had his fill of standing in Potter's shadow? Was the work of the Auror Department too much for a man who has admitted that the destruction of He Who Could Not Be Named's Horcruxes 'took its toll' on him? He shows no obvious signs of mental illness from a distance, but the public is not allowed close enough to make a proper assessment. Is this suspicious?

Hermione Granger, of course, was always the femme fatale of the group. Press reports of the time revealed that as a teenager she toyed with the young Potter's affections before being seduced away by the muscular Viktor Krum, finally settling for Potter's faithful sidekick. After a meteoric rise to Deputy Head of the Department of Magical

Law Enforcement, she is now tipped to go even higher within the Ministry, and is also mother to son, Hugo, and daughter, Rose. Does Hermione Granger prove that a witch really can have it all? (No – look at her hair.)

Then there are those members of Dumbledore's Army who receive slightly less publicity than Potter, Weasley and Granger (are they resentful? Almost certainly). Neville Longbottom, now a popular Herbology teacher at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, is here in Patagonia with his wife Hannah. Until recently the pair lived above the Leaky Cauldron in London, but rumour has it that Hannah has not only retrained as a Healer, but is applying for the job of Matron at Hogwarts. Idle gossip suggests that she and her husband both enjoy a little more Ogden's Old Firewhisky than most of us would expect from custodians of our children, but no doubt we all wish her the best of luck with her application.

Last of the ringleaders of Dumbledore's Army is, of course, Luna Lovegood (now married to Rolf Scamander, swarthy grandson of celebrated Magizoologist Newt). Still delightfully eccentric, Luna has been sweeping around the VIP section in robes composed of the flags of all sixteen qualifying countries. Her twin sons are 'at home with grandpa'. Is this a euphemism for 'too disturbed to be seen in public'? Surely only the unkindest would suggest so.

Sundry other members of the Army are here, but it is on these six that most interest is focused. Wherever there is a red head one may make an educated guess that it belongs to a Weasley, but it is difficult to tell whether it is George (wealthy co-manager of Weasleys' Wizard Wheezes), Charlie (dragon wrangler, still unmarried – why?) or Percy (Head of the Department of Magical Transportation – it's his fault if the Floo Network's too busy!). The only one who is easy to recognise is Bill who, poor man, is grievously scarred from an encounter with a werewolf and yet somehow (enchantment? Love Potion? Blackmail? Kidnap?) married the undeniably beautiful (though doubtless empty-headed) Fleur Delacour.

Word is that we shall see these and other members of Dumbledore's Army in the VIP boxes at the final, adding to the glitz and razzmatazz of a gala occasion. Let us hope that the behaviour of two of their younger hangers-on does not embarrass them, heaping shame on those who have previously brought honour to the name of wizard.

One always hesitates to invade the privacy of young people, but the fact is that anyone closely connected with Harry Potter reaps the benefits and must pay the penalty of public interest. No doubt Potter will be distressed to know that his sixteen-year-old godson Teddy Lupin – a lanky half-werewolf with bright blue hair – has been

behaving in a way unbefitting of wizarding royalty since arriving on the VIP campsite. It might be asking too much that the always-busy Potter keep a tighter rein on this wild boy, who was entrusted to his care by his dying parents, but one shudders to think what will become of Master Lupin without urgent intervention. Meanwhile, Mr and Mrs Bill Weasley might like to know that their beautiful, blonde daughter Victoire seems to be attracted to any dark corner where Master Lupin happens to be lurking. The good news is both of them seem to have invented a method of breathing through their ears. I can think of no other reason how they have survived such prolonged periods of what, in my young day, was called 'snogging.'

But let us not be severe. Harry Potter and his cohorts never claimed to be perfect! And for those who want to know exactly how imperfect they are, my new biography: *Dumbledore's Army: The Dark Side of the Demob* will be available from Flourish and Blotts on July 31st.